

**Attitudes towards Censorship of Political Movements in the United States of America:**

**#AllLivesMatter and #BlackLivesMatter**

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By

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**Abstract**

American politics is divisive (like many political systems worldwide now), and there are calls for censorship and de-platforming which are arguably anti-democratic. On the other hand, there are some rather unprincipled political actors who are perhaps not entirely honest, so one could legitimately argue for censorship in some cases. The present work aimed to examine psychological biases which influence support of censorship of another person; specifically, either a BLM or ALM-supporting protester. Using an experimental design with two Mechanical Turk samples (Study 1  $N = 294$ ; Study 2  $N = 428$ ), the study finds support for the hypotheses that when people have an opposing view to a protester, they are more likely to believe the protester has an ulterior motive, think they are giving a political signal, have a negative perceptions of the protester, and think sharing their view would be harmful, thus increasing support of censorship. These results support and add to the current literature of censorship and collective activism.

## Attitudes Towards Censorship

### **Attitudes towards Censorship of Political Movements in the United States of America: #AllLivesMatter and #BlackLivesMatter**

The debate surrounding censorship will always be a contentious issue, with debate around what is deemed appropriate to share and how we should react, being a constant discussion in daily politics. Instances of censorship may vary from a person altering what they post as a Facebook status (see Kwon et al., 2015), preventing speakers from giving speeches at universities (see Rankin, 2018), to the currently controversial censorship of information both internally and externally in the People's Republic of China in regards to the 2020 Coronavirus outbreak (see Zhong, 2020). Freedom of speech is an idea that is widely considered a human right and an important aspect of many societies (United Nations General Assembly, 1948). A Pew Research Center study reported a median of 62% participants from 27 countries said that the right to freely express their views is protected, with the degree of perceived protection increasing in advancing economies (Wike et al., 2019).

However, despite the wide support and endorsement of free speech, why is censorship still a concept that is entertained today? In the current socio-political climate where in some areas it appears that the world is stepping up and empowering people to speak out that have found it difficult or had no possibility of doing so before (e.g., the global #MeToo movement), there are still instances of people being shut down and silenced (e.g., the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi). At a time where it seems like everybody has access to a platform to share their views, it is no wonder that there are some supporters of censorship on an everyday level. In democratic societies, such as the United States of America, people are tiptoeing in the grey area between freedom of speech and the right to not be bombarded with obscene messages. How people differ on what they think is acceptable and tolerable will vary greatly, between each individual person. Group membership is a salient item of an individual's identity, and thus, people may support censorship if it disagrees with their identities as members of salient groups.

An individual's identity is complex and developed from many different areas of one's life. What people choose as central to their identity is entirely unique and varied from person to person. One's social identity helps an individual to relate to members of the same social group (the in-group) and helps guide interaction with persons outside of the in-group (Stets & Burke, 2000). A person's membership to a social group influences how they think, feel, and behave. An example of one commonly held salient factor for a person's identity is political partisanship (Green et al., 2004). No matter what area of the world a person comes from, politics will often be a sensitive issue for people to discuss, particularly if you are unsure of the political standing of those around you. The aphorism that one should never discuss religion or politics in polite conversation, on the surface may be a simple social guide to avoid uncomfortable conflict with people, but may encompass a wider psychological service (Papacharissi, 2004).

### **Social identity**

Social identity can be thought of as salient features of an individual's identity, that are generated based on their social grouping (Ethier & Deaux, 1994; Stets & Burke, 2000; Tajfel, 1982). By figuring out what one considers important enough to hold fast when interacting with a range of different people, across different situations, gives a reasonably strong indication what is truly important to us. However, this does not necessarily mean that we will make every aspect of our identity present in every situation. A person will adapt what features of themselves are present depending on the context, thus indicating that social identity is a dynamic feature in one's identity (Cains, 1982; Ethier & Deaux, 1994). For example, it may be entirely appropriate to be extroverted and boisterous when you are hanging out with your friends, however, if you are in a work meeting, it may not be

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considered appropriate to be fooling around and making jokes. These factors are what can be considered to make up an individual's social identity (Cains, 1982; Tajfel, 1982).

Political and social identity are linked to what "group" one identifies with (Deschamps, 2012). Many factors can influence what group an individual will identify with, but once an identification is made, it tends to be an aspect of one's identity which is likely to remain constant throughout one's life (Green et al., 2004). While active interest typically waxes and wanes in relation to political elections, Green and colleagues (2004) suggest that for many people, political identity remains constant from the age of approximately thirty years, and is relatively unaffected by extreme political events, such as economic recession or scandals. Furthermore, as level of connection to a political party increases, individuals start to view that party through a favorable light, thus highlighting positive aspects, and neglecting negative aspects (Green et al., 2004).

Cains (1982) discussed the influence that political and social conflict may have on one's social identity by focusing on people in Northern Ireland during the conflict which occurred from the 1960s to 1998. Two dominant social groups found in Ireland were Catholics and Protestants; not necessarily directly relating to religious beliefs, rather a grouping factor in the wider sense. When assessing census data, only 3% of the population failed to use either Catholic or Protestant as a describing factor of themselves. Despite this indication that Protestant-Catholic grouping was a salient feature to a large majority of the population, it was reported that there was not a case of outgroup devaluation in response to the conflicts, but rather a positive bias to the in-group.

The US is now a place in which people deny obvious truths when those truths are associated with their political opponents. For example, liberals will disagree "all lives matter" and conservatives will disagree "black lives matter," despite both sides presumably actually caring about all people's lives (Bennett-Swanson, 2017; Horowitz & Livingston, 2016). To

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maintain one's standing within their group, people will inherently follow the majority opinion. This is a simple tool to avoid negative social interactions within one's group. The justification-suppression model (White & Crandell, 2017) theorizes that one aspect of prejudicial speech arises from the need to conform to the social norms present in a group. Suppression is used by the individual to avoid voicing their true thoughts, in favor of voicing the in-group opinion.

Social identity and group membership are powerful in shaping a range of actions and behaviors, from helping behaviors (Levine et al., 2005), and stress response (Haslam & Reicher, 2006) to collective action (van Zomeren et al., 2012). People often advocate and engage in collective action for their group, in order to make a difference which reflects the moral foundation of the group.

## Social activism

Social activism has been a direct tool to aid in potential changes to issues on a large scale. Whether the scale be affecting just one specific community or reaches attention to promote change on a national level, the hope is to raise attention for a specific issue. This is done by challenging the existing government to take notice and be aware that the group will not let the issue go lightly.

When individuals participate in collective action, an individual begins to think, feel, and act as part of a group, rather than as an individual, and motivation is sourced from the will to improve the situation of the group (Tausch et al., 2011; van Zomeren, 2014). Tausch and colleagues examined differences between normative and non-normative collective action regarding efficacy and emotional mechanisms for actions. Non-normative action encompasses more extreme and aggressive political actions. It was observed that anger significantly predicted willingness to engage in normative action, but not when action was carried out by a third party (the government). Contempt significantly predicted an

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individual's willingness to engage in non-normative collective action, while anger only partially predicted this relationship. Furthermore, the perception of injustice, significantly predicted feelings of contempt and anger, thus proving to be a salient motivational factor for normative and non-normative action.

Feinberg et al., (2020) examined how extreme protest actions effect perception of the movement that the protesters support. It was found across six different studies that when the protests became more extreme (e.g., blocking highways or vandalizing property), it reduced participant's emotional connection with the movement, which in turn resulted in decreased overall identification and support of the movement. The current study intends to add to the research conducted by Feinberg and colleagues (2020), by examining not just perception of specific social movements, but seeing what factors may cause an observer of a non-extreme protester to encourage or and engage in censoring behavior, as extreme protesting, while more noticeable, would most likely only occur rarely in daily life. However, non-extreme, or peaceful protests, are much more common for most people to encounter (Andrews et al., 2018), thus being able to possibly gain insight into a more likely interaction may be more beneficial for both organizers or protests, and for people to be aware of how they react when they encounter a protester.

Given the strength at which political partisanship typically contributes to one's identity, it would be plausible for it to also influence how individuals interpret and react to political statements. The statements "All Lives Matter" (ALM) and "Black Lives Matter" (BLM) have become polarizing statements that people on either side of the political spectrum reject (e.g. Horowitz & Livingston, 2016). Social identity theory (Tajfel et al., 1979) provides theoretical reasoning as to why conflict arises between different social groups. Tajfel and colleagues (1979) note that it is practically difficult for an individual to share views that conflict with a strongly held group mentality. It is thought that this is because in a social

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platform, while an individual may be acting alone, they are still implicitly concerned with their in-group status and being a cohesive member of the group (Tajfel et al., 1979).

While the issue of ensuring all persons, and in particular, people who belong to minority groups, receive equal rights is by no means a new issue across the world, one movement that gained particular traction in the USA was the BLM movement in 2013. The hashtag #BlackLivesMatter was first created after civilian George Zimmerman was found not guilty of the murder of unarmed, 17-year old, African American Trayvon Martin. It was created to draw attention to the injustice that many African Americans were facing in the USA from law enforcement (Lebron, 2017; Gallagher et al., 2018). On social media platforms the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter was used nearly 30 million times between the period of July 2013 to May 2018 (Anderson et al., 2018), and tended to spike in response to major events against African American people. It became a representation for a major social movement that was starting in the USA from that time.

A 2016 Pew Research study specifically on how Americans views the BLM movement (Horowitz & Livingston, 2016). It was found that 43% of Americans support BLM movement, (of the 43% who support the BLM movement, 18% showed strong support), while 22% oppose. Horowitz and Livingston further examined how support differed by ethnicity and found that 40% of White Americans supported BLM, while 28% oppose. This level of support among Black Americans was unsurprisingly higher with 65% supporting and 12% opposing BLM. To examine if there was a difference based on partisan support of White Americans it was found that 20% of White Republicans supported BLM, while 52% opposed it. On the other hand, 64% of White Democrats supported the BLM movement, while only 8% opposed it. However, a Gallup poll reported that only 6% of Americans reported that they "felt the urge to organize or join a public demonstration" for Law Enforcement/Police Brutality/Black Lives Matter". 3% of Republicans reported that

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they would protest for Law Enforcement/Police Brutality/Black Lives Matter, while 6% of Democrats reported they would protest (Reinhart, 2018).

However, the hashtag #AllLivesMatter began to appear as an alternative option for some, as a counter-protest which attempted to remove the factor of race. While the All Lives Matter (ALM) hashtag may present itself as a somewhat favorable alternative to #BlackLivesMatter, by removing the factor of race from the discussion, this removes the chance for the conversation that the BLM hashtag was attempting to create (Gallagher et al., 2018).

Gallagher and colleagues (2018) ran analyses of over 860,000 tweets which contained either hashtags, to examine any differences between the use of the hashtag in conversation. The ALM tweets showed greater law enforcement supporting statements in comparison to the BLM tweets. It was also found that ALM tweets were more susceptible to getting taken over by BLM supporters, while the BLM tweets were less likely to get derailed by opposing internet users. Despite the differences found between the two hashtags, it was observed that there was at least some discussion about the deaths of African Americans (while #BLM was significantly higher).

## Free speech

Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) clearly states “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”. However, despite this article being written over 70 years ago, freedom of speech continues to be an ongoing issue. In an ideal world a clear balance would be in place, where people would have the freedom to discuss any topic they choose but be aware of what constitutes abusing this right by spreading hateful messages. This concept of a balance existing, in itself creates an issue of how and



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who is capable to make an unbiased decision of what is considered acceptable. In any society, there are rules that everyone agrees to abide by in order to maintain a civil society. It is somewhat paradoxical that the person or people at the head of society may be able to say that it is acceptable to discuss one topic, but unacceptable to discuss another because it violates a commonly held view. But just because someone disagrees with a viewpoint does not necessarily make it unimportant. Discrimination under the guise of free speech is a pertinent issue, that cannot be ignored. However, that goes beyond the scope of this work.

One possible avenue of interest that arises for the present research is that while free speech may be consistently supported within honest debate, does support of free speech diminish when dishonest actors enter the discussion? Group membership is a salient cue to infer another person's mental state and intention (Reeder et al., 2005). One possible direction that could result if a person acts dishonestly, and it reflects poorly on the group, could be that the dishonest person faces rejection from the group. Marques and Paez (1994) observed that when an individual shares an opinion that varies from the commonly held view of the group, rejection of the individual occurs to ensure uniformity within the group. Furthermore, unfavorable in-group members were subsequently viewed as more negative than out-group members that held the same position (Marques & Paez, 1994).

## **Dog-whistles**

At their core, both ALM and BLM statements reflect the desire for equal rights. However, these statements serve two functions: they are truth claims and they are social identity markers. As truth claims, nearly everyone would agree they are correct (who would suggest that the lives of black people do not matter, and who would argue that the lives of all people do not matter?). However, as discussed previously, clearly not everyone agrees with both statements. It is proposed that this may be caused by a psychological bias, in which certain people perceive an identity marker within the statement. As identity markers, people

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will agree or disagree depending on the identity they express. This identity may be possibly linked to many aspects of an individual identity, however in the situation of dog-whistle statements, it is proposed that it is linked to partisanship, in part due to the polarizing findings in the Horowitz and Livingston (2016) study. This concept that a statement can be interpreted in different ways depending on what political identity one processes is referred to as a dog-whistle.

Similar to the use of codes to keep a message secret, the theory behind dog-whistle statements is based on the assumption that the target audience for the dog-whistle have held an underlying attitude towards a particular out-group (Haney-López, 2015; Wetts & Willer, 2019). Dog-whistles have been observed in politics on multiple different occasions. Ranging from Ronald Reagan's campaign in 1980, Regan states during a speech that "I believe in states' rights" to Donald Trump's campaign promises to "crack down on illegal aliens" and "build a wall" between Mexico and the USA. For some people the statements made may appear to be a clear statement, that many people would agree on without much thought. However, the idea behind the dog-whistle is that for those that support the figure, the statements serve as a double meaning, theoretically showing the true intentions behind the cause.

For example, when Reagan said, "I believe in states' rights," during a speech he gave in Mississippi during the 1980 campaign trail, the statement had varied interpretation. To some people, it could be interpreted as Reagan simply making a reference to the constitutional law. However, to certain people, a second interpretation was made. When Reagan gave his speech, this was at a time when racial equality was held as an undisputed right that people should have in the USA. Or at least that was what was thought of on the surface. By making this statement Reagan was aiming to speak to the voters, predominantly in the South of the United States, where racism was still active, and segregation was being

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fought. Reagan was aiming to indicate to those southern voters that the decision about whether desegregation was applied would be handed back to the individual states. This was significant for Reagan's political ambition because previously people from the South had been firm Democratic supporters, so by making this statement that he, a Republican nominee, shared some of the same values as they held.

Because certain statements act as dog-whistles, when a dog-whistle statement is made with the intent of sharing an ulterior meaning to a certain group of people, people on the other side will deny their truth, despite them being inherently true. As the statements are dog-whistles, the statements become more and more toxic to the other side, because moderates on the opposing side affected by the dog-whistle will not deny them (because they are obviously true) nor affirm them (because doing so would signal an opposing social identity). The statements become stronger signals of social identity and reduced identification as being truth claims. At the same time, people on the supportive side (and people in the middle) may still see them as truth claims and think it bizarre and irrational for the other side to deny them.

It is important to note that the use of dog-whistle statements similar to ALM are not exclusively observed in the USA. In New Zealand, a similar statement “He iwi tahi tātou” or “We are now one people” was used by Governor Hobson upon signing of the Treaty of Waitangi (Hobson's Pledge Trust, n.d.). The Treaty of Waitangi was intended to be a peace treaty between the tangata whenua and the new European settlers. On the surface Hobson's statement of “we are now one people”, appears perfectly acceptable. Hobson intended to remove any reference to any specific ethnic group from all legislation. However, in hindsight, this can be viewed as an early attempt to try and reduce any direct influence that the Māori people may have in the governing of the country.

**Censorship**

Censorship may occur in a range of different forms and degrees of severity. No matter how subtle an action may be perceived to be, if it limits another person's ability to freely share their views in a safe manner, then that constitutes as censorship (Colman, 2015). In the current study, self-censorship is considered the act of refraining from speaking or acting due to the perceived perceptions of those around you. This may present itself in the form of partially or completely altering another person's response or ability to act in a given situation. Furthermore, the act of censoring others is of also focus. The individual factors and psychological biases that influence a person's likelihood to support censorship of another person will also be examined.

When conflict arises between different groups of people, a tension can occur in regard to how individuals feel they are able to share or discuss certain statements or topics. For an individual, an internal conflict can arise, due to the desire to show one's true opinions, but not wanting to go against the views of their in-group. This internal conflict can result in intra and interpersonal censorship. Interpersonal censorship is the act of censoring the behavior of others. Conversely, intrapersonal, or self-censorship, can occur when an individual feels the need to conform to the social norms of one's group or to ease social interaction (Horton, 2011; Loury, 1994).

Biased processing of information, through possible heuristics such as the confirmation bias, suggest that when an individual is faced with information that opposes a strongly held belief or opinion, an individual will dismiss the conflicting information (Nickerson, 1998). Censoring of oneself and others speech when faced with information that seems incongruent, may reflect a similar result.

A study examining academic freedom in the United Kingdom observed that participants were more likely to oppose any situation of hypothetical censoring of free

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speech, but when it comes to supporting or condemning an act that has already occurred there was a much closer margin (Kaufmann, 2019). Therefore, indicating that people may possibly favor the *idea* of free speech, but when presented with a concrete case that has already occurred, they may have a better idea of what harm was caused, or assume that the action that was carried out was for the best, thus the change in positions.

A 2019 study examined how people differed in acceptance towards protesters at a university campus, and how partisanship effected this relationship (Giersch, 2019). It was initially hypothesised that liberals would be more accepting of allowing protesters on campus, while conservatives would be more likely to support punitive action. Similar to the hypotheses outlined below for the current study, Giersch further hypothesised that increased punitive action would be reported when participants had opposing view to the protesters (2019). Interestingly, it was observed that of the conservative participants, the Mechanical Turk sample did indicate significantly increased willingness to punish the protester, while the student sample did not show this difference. It was suggested that this may have been due to either sample size differences (Mechanical Turk:  $n = 361$ ; students:  $n = 164$ ) or student's non-volatile perception of their campus. The second hypothesis was fully supported across both student and Mechanical Turk participants, that participants were more punitive when the protester had opposing views. This was true of both conservative and liberal participants.

It is hypothesized that the reason that statements, such as ALM and BLM, serve both as value claims and identity signals, and that people treat statements from their side as value claims, but statements from the other side as identity signals. The result is that people view others on their own side as making a straightforward value claim that seemingly any reasonable person would agree with—that the other side somehow disagrees with. This is a barrier to tolerance, because it makes the other side seem entirely unreasonable.

**Psychology of hidden motives**

The perception of a person's moral reasoning for performing an action can drastically alter perception of the outcome. Contrary to previous literature on side effects, Knobe (2003a) posed that the degree to whether a side effects may be intentional, is affected by one's attitude towards the side effect. When participants of Knobe's research were asked to judge whether a side effect was intentional or not, participants were significantly more likely to perceive intention in a harm condition, rather than a help condition. In a later paper Knobe extended the previous work (Knobe, 2003a), and proposed a that for an outcome to be considered intentional there are two components that must be met; skill and judgement of the outcome (2003b). If a person is considered to have sufficient skill to perform an action and the action is worthy of praise, then greater degree of intention is perceived when the act is completed. In comparison to the scenario where a person has no skill, but the act is still considered of praise, if the act is completed, there would be a perception of low intention.

Vonasch and Baumeister (2017) extended the research examining the intention of side effects (Knobe 2003a; 2003b), through the introduction of the Tradeoffs Justification Model of the side-effect effect. Vonasch and Baumeister examined whether perception of intention of side effects would alter if the judgement being made violated sacred moral values. The Tradeoffs Justification Model considers the moral background of the decision being made, and the expected result of the action, thus interacting to form the side-effect effect. Thus, if a person is being forced to make a decision that is based on a sacred moral value (e.g., saving a persons life in a hospital), but there was a negative side-effect outside of the concept of the moral value (e.g., increased wait times for other patients), intention associated with the side effect would be lower, than if the decision was a non-sacred moral value.

The perceived intention of an act, and the side effects that result, is crucial in the perception of ulterior motives. Research into ulterior motives compliments work into the

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side-effect effect and the Tradeoffs Justification Model (Knobe 2003a; 2003b; Vonasch & Baumeister, 2017) by specifically examining how a person views someone who hold opposing views. Reeder et al., (2005) observed that people have the tendency to assume negative motivation in someone who has an opinion that varies from their own. Moreover, this finding was exacerbated in people who strongly identified with the view of difference.

The perception of ulterior motive in the political sphere compliments the literature of dog-whistle politics. Again, using the example of Ronald Reagan, "I believe in states' rights," during his 1980 presidential campaign, the interpretation of this dog-whistle statement underlies the ulterior motive that Reagan held. As assessed by Reeder et al., (2005), people who opposed Reagan were more inclined to think that Reagan had a negative ulterior motive for using this statement. However, people who were supportive of Reagan, took the statement at face value, and were less likely to think Reagan had any negative meaning behind his words.

Anyone that gets called out for censoring will have their own logical explanation for why they engaged in censorship. While this inherently contradicts the right of free speech, in some instances, this may be justified if the hidden motives that the person who has been censored are made clear and could cause obvious harm. While free speech is meant to support people with legitimate views conversing, people can abuse it to further dangerous objectives. Or at least, people might believe this to be true.

## The Present Study

There has been a lot of interest surrounding the statements Black Lives Matter and All Lives Matter over the last seven years since the terms were coined, however, there is no currently existing study which examines how they act as truth statements and identity markers for political partisanship. While non-participation as a form of self-censorship has been studied (see Hayes et al., 2006), further research into censorship of others has not been

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examined within the context of the All Lives Matter and Black Lives Matter movements. The proposed study intends to fill this current gap in the literature, through two studies which examine various possible factors which may influence censorship of others.

There are two aims of the proposed research. The first aim is to identify that participants respond differently to statements when they have a political affiliation to them, compared to statements which do not. Study 1 aims to address this by asking participants to indicate and explain their support for the statements “Do you support the statement “Black Lives Matter”?” with “it is important to protect the lives of black people?” and “Do you support the statement “All Lives Matter”?” with “is important to protect everybody's lives?”. Study 2 aims to identify whether participants would hypothetically actively censor a person when that person is sharing their views publicly on the statements ALM or BLM.

In Study 1 Participants will be asked to give a yes/no response to indicate whether they support both the political and non-political, rephrased statement. They will explain their reasoning for their response to the politicized statement. Participants will be asked whether the politicized and nonpoliticized statements have equal meaning, and whether they believe people share their view on the political statement to give a political signal.

In Study 2, the key dependent variable that we are aiming to assess is censorship of others. Participants are first asked to indicate their level of agreement towards the movements ALM and BLM, and the idea that black/all lives matter. Next, participants are given a vignette, and asked answer questions about how they would judge a person that is loudly and publicly supporting either ALM or BLM. Five measures were created to aim to assess different factors which may contribute to censorship (Does the protester have an ulterior motive? Is the protester sharing the statement to signal their political identity? Whether they think they are a bad person, whether sharing their views is harmful, and whether they should be censored). Furthermore, the participants are also asked to indicate their level of support to



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seven various further actions (beat up, fired, given an award, go to jail, be shown on the local news, be publicly shamed, and have their views monitored).

It is important to be able to gain insight into the various factors which affect censorship. In a socially aware environment, where freedom of speech is a right, gaining awareness of how and what information gets presented and shared is paramount. While from an external view, one cannot directly influence what another person shares, if an insight of what certain people are willing to share, and where common ground can be found, an understanding of true stance could be obtained.

Furthermore, it is also important to explore how political identity and various censorship types relate. This may be able to assist in gaining insight into understanding how and why people respond when faced with beliefs which are incongruent to their own. It may also aid in promoting positive interactions between people with differing political opinions, which may be particularly beneficial in times of political unrest.

## ***Hypotheses***

All hypotheses were pre-registered. Based on findings of previous research and literature, while considering online trends and the current political climate in the U.S.A, the following hypotheses were formulated;

### **Study 1 Hypotheses.**

Hypothesis One (H1): It is hypothesised that statement support will be influenced by partisanship in such a way that liberals will be more likely to support BLM and conservatives will be more likely to support ALM. No hypothesis is given in regard to participants in the control condition as it is not based on any existing movement.

Hypothesis Two (H2): There will be widespread agreement with the nonpoliticized statement. However, participants who agree with each politicized statement will agree that it means "[group] should receive fair treatment and justice under the law" (the non-politicized

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statement). However, participants who disagree with the statement will be less likely to agree the statement means that.

Hypothesis Three (H3): Participants who do not support the politicized statements will think the statements are motivated by political signaling to a greater extent than participants who do support the politicized statements.

### **Study 2 Hypotheses.**

Hypothesis Four (H4): Participants who disagree with the political statement and do not identify with the movement will be more likely to indicate that they would be in support of censorship towards a hypothetical person who agrees with the movement and statement, in comparison to participants that agree with the protesters statement and movement.

Hypothesis Five (H5): Participants will be more willing to censor others when they think they have an ulterior motive, when they think the statement is an political signal, when they think they are a bad person, when they think sharing the views is harmful. Furthermore, support of possible reactions to the protester are also of interest (e.g., be fired). It is predicted that support of possible reactions will also be predicted by the same factors as mentioned above.

### **Study 1**

In Study 1, participants were asked to consider their individual views towards a political and non-politicized statement and give brief reasoning for those views. Before examining attitudes towards censorship of a BLM or ALM-supporting protester, it was important to first ensure that there was a true difference in viewpoint between different group members of the two movement. Therefore, Study 1 examines how people interpret the two statements, whether support for the statements is influenced by partisanship, and whether people think that statements act as political signals.

## Method

### *Participants*

Our preregistered sample (<https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=26he9p>) for Study 1 was 300 participants from Amazon Mechanical Turk. In total, 304 American participants were recruited and completed the study. After the attention checks were applied, 10 participants were removed, thus data collected from 294 participants were used for analysis. This study was completed on October the 15th, 2019. The participants had a mean age of 36.9 years ( $SD = 11.2$ ; range = 42) and 46.5% ( $n = 140$ ) were females. Participants came from a range of different ethnicities and races; 9.0% identified as Black, 74.1% as white, 0.7% as American Indian, Alaskan Native, or Native American, 6% as Hispanic, and 1.7% as Other. The split of political partisanship was slightly leaning to the left but was consistent across conditions; 18% identified as very liberal, 20% as liberal, 12% as somewhat liberal, 21% as moderate, 11% as somewhat conservative, 13% as conservative, and 5% as very conservative.

### *Manipulation*

Each participant was randomly assigned to one of three conditions (ALM ( $n = 98$ ), BLM ( $n = 100$ ), or Control ( $n = 96$ )). In the control condition, the statement “Asian Lives Matter” was presented to participants, with the non-politicized statement “Do you think that Asian people should receive fair treatment and justice under the law?”. The selected control group used was intended to be unprovocative of any strong opinions on average was used. Each condition consisted of a political statement and a rephrased synonymous statement. See Appendix A for the full list of questions posed in each condition. The order of statements shown was randomly presented.

### *Measures*

**Statement Support.** Participants were asked to say if they did or did not support the statement (*yes/no*) and give a brief statement to explain their reasoning. The explanation

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acted as an attention check, as anyone who answered nonsensically (e.g. “I think this”, or “khfsdk”) was not included in the analysis.

**Equal Meaning.** A measure of whether participants thought the political and non-politicized statements had the same meaning. For example, “In your opinion does "All Lives Matter", mean the same as "everybody should receive fair treatment and justice under the law"?”. Participants responded using a 6-point Likert scale (*Strongly Disagree* (1), *Disagree* (2), *Somewhat Disagree* (3), *Somewhat Agree* (4), *Agree* (5), *Strongly Agree* (6)).

**Political Signal.** A measure of whether participants thought people said the political statement to give a political signal. For example, “In your opinion, do people mainly say, "Black Lives Matter" to signal their political allegiance?”. Participants responded using a 6-point Likert scale (*Strongly Disagree* (1), *Disagree* (2), *Somewhat Disagree* (3), *Somewhat Agree* (4), *Agree* (5), *Strongly Agree* (6)).

## Procedure

Participants were recruited via the survey site Amazon Mechanical Turk. Participants first read through the information sheet and had to indicate their consent after reading the consent form (See Appendix A). For those who continued to the questionnaire, participants were asked to say if they did or did not support the both the political and non-political statement (*yes* (1) or *no* (0)) and give a brief statement to explain the reasoning. Participants were then asked to indicate whether they thought the political and non-politicized statements had the same meaning. Then, participants were asked to indicate whether they thought people said the political statement as was to give a political signal Finally, participants were asked to provide various demographic information. The full questionnaire for Study 1 is presented in Appendix A.

***Research Design***

This study had an experimental design. The dependent variables were response to the question “Do you support [group] lives matter?”. To examine whether participants agreed that the politicized and non-politicized statements have the same meaning, planned contrasts within a 3 (ALM, BLM, AsianLM) x 2 (agree/disagree with politicized statement) mixed model ANOVA was used.

**Results**

Before analysis was conducted, attention checks were conducted to ensure that participants paid enough attention while completing the study. 4% ( $n = 11$ ) participants were removed from the dataset, due to failing the attention check. To conduct the analysis of Study 1, all decisions of significance were assessed using a significance level of  $\alpha = .05$ . To ensure there was no order effect, an order variable was included, for each initial analysis. All analyses were pre-registered.

***Influence of Partisanship***

To examine whether overall political standing predicted statement support of the political statements, binomial logistic regression was performed. It was hypothesised that more liberal participants would be more likely to support BLM, while the more conservative participants would be more likely to support ALM. The analysis was first run including the order variable, to examine whether the order in which the non-political and political statement were presented had any effect on participant response. Order was found to be non-significant ( $p = .644$ ), therefore, the analysis was repeated with order removed.

It was observed that there is was a significant interaction between participant's overall political stance and condition when predicting participant level of support for the political statements, as shown in Table 2. Furthermore, Figure 1 illustrates the interaction between condition and political support. It was shown that the more liberal a person is, the more likely

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they are to support BLM, while the more conservative a person is, the more likely they are to support ALM, thus supporting H1. The control condition did not indicate a significant relationship between condition and overall political support (see Figure 1).

**Table 2**

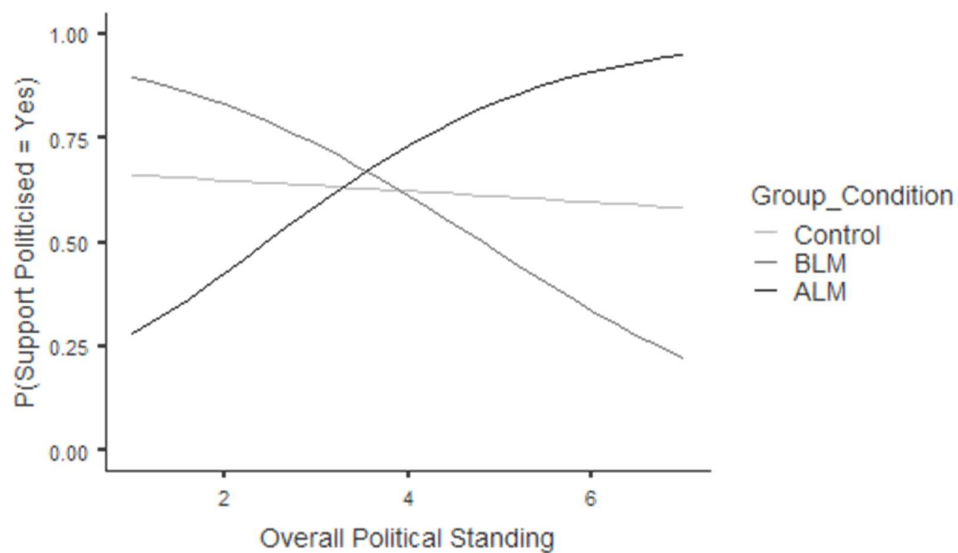
*Coefficients of Binomial Logistic Regression Predicting Support of Politicised Statement*

Predictor	Estimate	SE	Z	p
Intercept	0.7270	0.445	1.635	0.102
Group_Condition:				
BLM – Control	2.0055	0.738	2.716	0.007
ALM – Control	-2.3230	0.693	-3.350	<.001
Overall Political Standing	-0.0559	0.115	-0.485	0.628
Group_Condition * Overall Political Standing:				
(BLM – Control) * Overall Political Standing	-0.5130	0.178	-2.874	0.004
(ALM – Control) * Overall Political Standing	0.7065	0.197	3.584	<.001

*Note.* Estimates represent the log odds of "Support Politicised = Yes" vs. "Support Politicised = No"

**Figure 1**

*Interaction plot of Political Support and Condition in Predicting Support of Political Statement*



*Note.* Overall Political Standings, 1 – Very Liberal and 7 – Very Conservative; Support of Statement = 1

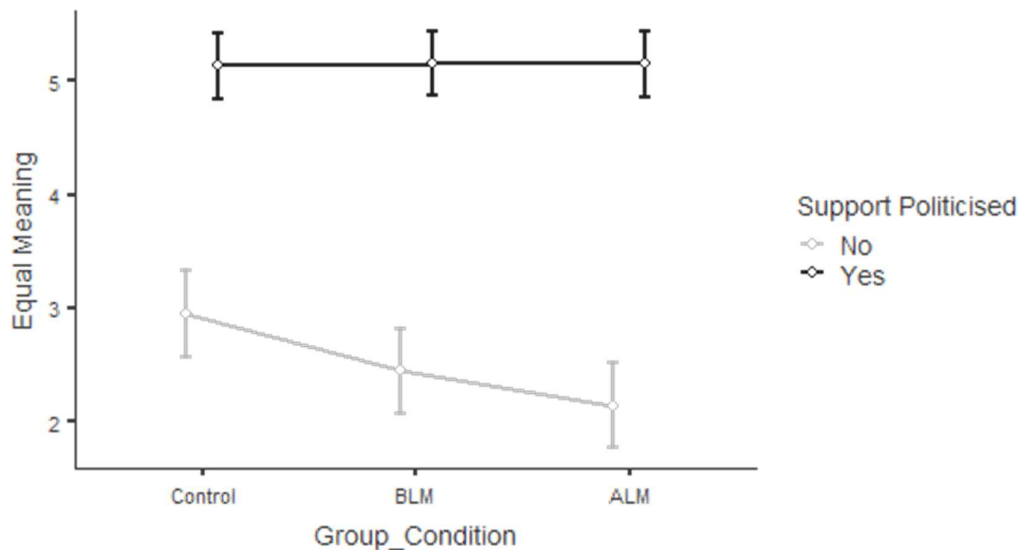
***Equal Statements***

Level of support for the non-politicized statement in comparison to the political statement was of interest. In the Control condition the whole sample supported the non-politicized statement, while 64% supported the political statement. In the BLM condition 97% of the sample indicated support for the non-politicized statement, while 64% supported the political statement. In the ALM condition 99% indicated support for the non-politicized statement, while 62% supported the political statement. Therefore, as the percentages of supported differed between the two statements, further analysis was conducted.

The second analysis that was conducted examined whether statement support influenced participant's belief that the given political statement had equal meaning with the corresponding non-political statement. The analysis was first run including the order variable, to examine whether the order in which the non-political and political statement were presented had any effect on participant response. Order was non-significant ( $p = .629$ ), therefore, the analysis was repeated with order removed. It was observed that there was a significant relationship between statement support and whether participants believe that the political statement has equal meaning with the non-political statement ( $F(1, 287) = 358.12, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.546$ ). The interaction between group condition and support of the political statement was non-significant ( $F(2, 287) = 2.94, p = .055, \eta^2 = 0.009$ ), thus, a pre-registered planned comparison of the marginal means was conducted to examine if there was significant difference within the conditions. The marginal means were examined and are displayed in Figure 2 and give support to the posed hypotheses that those that support the political statements believe that there is equal meaning between the political statement and non-political statement, thus supporting H2.

**Figure 2**

*Estimated Marginal Means: Group Condition \* Support of Political Statement  
to Predict Perception of Equal Meaning*



*Note.* On Y-Axis, Equal Meaning: 1 = Strongly Disagree 6 = Strongly Agree

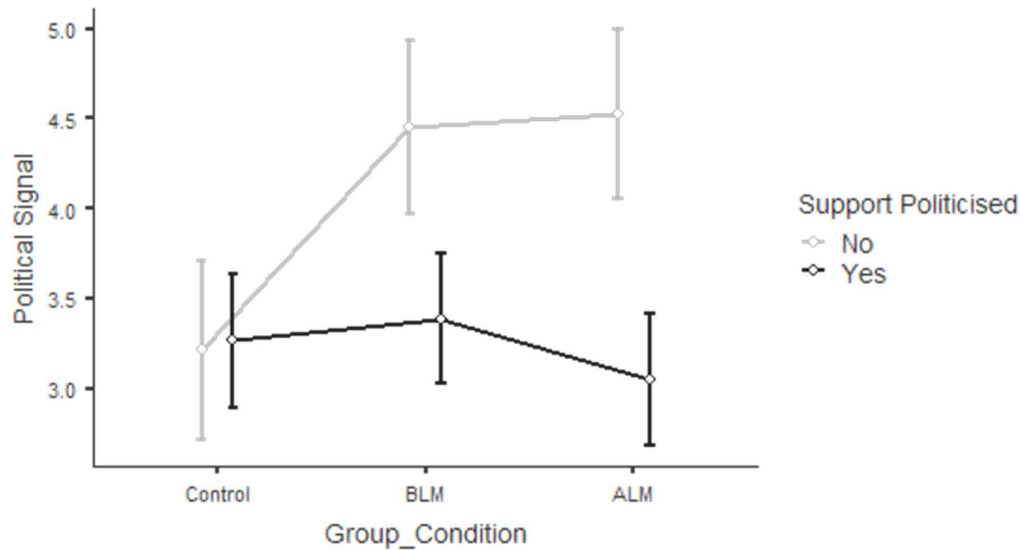
### ***Political Signal***

The third analysis that was conducted examined whether statement support influenced participant's belief that the political statements are used as a political signal. The analysis was first run including the order variable, to examine whether the order in which the non-political and political statement were presented had any effect on participant response. Order was non-significant ( $p = .979$ ), therefore, the analysis was repeated with order removed. It was observed that there was a significant relationship between statement support and whether participants believe that the political statement has equal meaning with the non-political statement ( $F(1, 287) = 21.16, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.064$ ). A significant interaction between support of political statement and condition was observed ( $F(2, 287) = 6.64, p = .002, \eta^2 = 0.040$ ) and is displayed in Figure 3 and supports H3 that those that support the political statements have lower levels of belief that the statements are used as political signals. However, no difference was observed in the AsianLM group, which could be explained because this is not a statement used in real politics.



**Figure 3**

*Marginal Estimated Means: Group Condition \* Support of Political Statement to Predict Perception of Political Signal*



*Note.* On Y-Axis, Equal Meaning: 1 = Strongly Disagree 6 = Strongly Agree

## Discussion

The first study sought to explore whether people differed in support between the two political statements “All Lives Matter” and “Black Lives Matter”. As hypothesized, support towards the two statements was influenced by partisanship. The more liberal a person was, the more likely they were to support BLM, while the more conservative you are, are more likely they are to support BLM. As expected, people’s political beliefs did not influence their support for the non-politicized control statement Asian Lives Matter. Thus, people’s political beliefs were associated with their support for ALM and BLM, but not semantically similar phrases about nonpoliticized groups.

The use of social media to promote and discuss social movements has enabled the growth of social movements on a large scale (e.g. Anderson et al., 2018). However, as discussed by Faris et al., (2017) platforms such as Twitter and Facebook are highly partisan,

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in particular, centre-left and far right. Thus, the initial perception that support of BLM and ALM are highly influenced by partisanship may have possibly been skewed by the underlying partisan bias within social media. However, it was found that this was not the case, thus giving supporting evidence to the claim that liberals are more likely to support BLM and reject ALM, while the opposite is the case for conservative. Thus, supporting H1.

As well as stating support of a political statement, participants also indicated their support for a non-politicized version of the political statement. This was of interest to examine whether people who support the political statement see the statement as a truth statement. For example, if a participant was in the BLM condition, they indicated support to both “Black Lives Matter” and to the phrase “Do you think that all black people should receive fair treatment and justice under the law, alongside all people?”. Almost the entire sample (98.6%) agreed with the non-politicized statement, however only 63.3% of the sample agreed with the political statements (individual condition percentages are shown previously). Furthermore, when participants were asked whether they thought the political statement and non-politicized statements were equal, it was observed that participants who had indicated agreement towards the political statement were more likely to agree that had equal meaning to the non-politicized statement. Whereas, participants who disagreed with the political statement were more likely to disagree the political statement had equal meaning to the non-politicized statement. As equal meaning was observed across all three conditions this supports hypothesis two.

The non-politicized statements were created to try and encompass the values that are important at the core of both the BLM (<https://blacklivesmatter.com/what-we-believe/>) and the ALM movement (Gallagher et al., 2018). When a cause aligns with an individual’s person beliefs and norms, it makes it much more likely for an individual to support a cause (Stern et al., 1999). Thus, belief that the political statement is equivalent to the non-politicized

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statement enables the political statement to be perceived as a truth statement by supporters, as almost everyone supports the non-politicised statement. This belief may ease the psychological discomfort that is possibly faced by supporters when they are confronted by opponents to either movement. Belief in the truth statement, in turn, then may act as a justification for the possible actions towards people that do not support either movement. This idea is further examined in Study 2.

The final analysis of Study 1 observed that participants that supported the political statement were more likely to disagree that people share their stance towards the statement to signal their political allegiance. However, participants that did not support the political statement were more likely to agree that people share their stance towards the statement to signal their political allegiance. This was observed in both the ALM and BLM conditions, but not in the control condition. Thus, supporting H3.

The result that people who opposed either movements were more likely to think that people mainly share their view of the movement to signal their political allegiance may be related to the previous finding that partisanship significantly predicted support of the ALM and BLM movements, and the non-significant finding in the control condition for both analyses. If the partisan nature behind the movements is relatively well known, then participants may automatically make assumptions about someone else if either political preference or view towards either movement is known.

Perception that people may share their view of social movements to signal their political allegiance may generate the belief that the signal has an ulterior motive. Following the result of the second analysis, that people who opposed the movement did not believe that the political statement had equal meaning to the non-politicized statement could be related to perception of political signaling. If participants do not believe that the political statement acts as an equivalent truth statement to the same degree of supporters, then they generate their

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own plausible ulterior motive to explain why the person has shared their view. This potential reasoning is examined further in Study 2.

### Study 2

Building off Study 1, this study aimed to test specific psychological biases which increased a person's support of censorship towards either an ALM or BLM-supporting protester. Five measures were created (censorship, ulterior motive, political signal, negative perception, and perception of harm), which were hypothesized to be influential on support of censorship, in addition to seven potential consequences. These measures and consequences were assessed individually to examine how identification effected response to the measure, then a full model which aimed to predict censorship was modelled. Furthermore, mediation analyses were conducted to examine the mediating effect of the four measures on censorship.

## Method

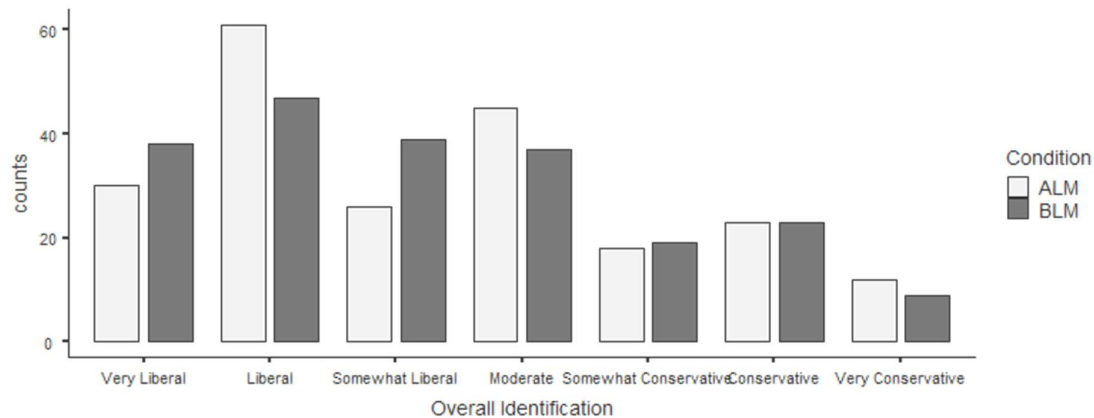
### *Participants*

Our preregistered sample (<https://aspredicted.org/blind.php?x=gr7zv6>) for Study 2 was 500 participants from Amazon Mechanical Turk. In total, 502 American participants were recruited and completed the study. After the attention checks were applied, 74 participants were removed, thus data collected from 428 participants were used for analysis. This study was completed on December 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019. The participants had a mean age of 35.8 years ( $SD = 10.6$ ; range = 41) and 42.6% ( $n = 182$ ) were females (two participants responded as other). Participants came from a range of different ethnicities and races; 9.8% identified as Black, 75.6% as white, 0.9% as American Indian, Alaskan Native, or Native American, 7.7% as Asian or Pacific Islander, 4.0% as Hispanic, and 1.9% as Other. This was a very similar racial distribution, in comparison to Study 1. There was a relatively even split of political support across the three groups. This data is displayed in Figure 4.

### Figure 4

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### *Spread of Political Partisanship within conditions*



### ***Manipulation***

Each participant was randomly assigned to one of two conditions (ALM  $n = 216$ ; BLM  $n = 212$ ). The conditions varied depending on whether the protester in their condition was either an ALM-supporter or a BLM-supporter, thus some of the wording of specific questions varied based on condition (e.g., Do you believe that They don't care about Black people? For the BLM condition, versus Do you believe that They don't care about All people? For the ALM condition) See Appendix B for the full list of questions posed in each question. Both conditions gave support for both movements, but the movement that was not presented in the scenario was asked at the end of the main questionnaire block to avoid any potential priming effects.

### ***Measures***

**Statement Support.** Participants were asked to say if they did or did not support the statement using a 7-point Likert scale (*Fully Disagree* (1), *Disagree* (2), *Somewhat Disagree* (3), *Neither Disagree nor Agree* (4), *Somewhat Agree* (5), *Agree* (6), *Fully Agree* (7)). It is noted that the response to the initial two questions is slightly different from Study 1, where participants answered on a dichotomous scale (*yes/no*). This was adjusted to enable a wider range of opinions to be expressed, so the effect of level of support could be examined. This was not necessary for Study. The participants were also asked to give a brief statement to

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explain their reasoning. The explanation acted as an attention check, as anyone who answered nonsensically (e.g. “I think this”, or “khfsdk”) was not included in the analysis.

**Individual Measures Relating to Censorship.** Five measures were designed, with the intention of encompassing various aspects that may influence people’s likelihood of engaging in censorship towards a BLM or ALM-supporting protester. Participants responded using a 6-point Likert scale (*Strongly Disagree* (1), *Disagree* (2), *Somewhat Disagree* (3), *Somewhat Agree* (4), *Agree* (5), *Strongly Agree* (6)). This Likert scale response mimics the response scale used in Study 1. The internal consistency for each measure was measured by Cronbach’s  $\alpha$ . The final Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  is shown in line with the measure.

**Table 2**

### *Study 2 Measure Design*

Measure	Question	Cronbach’s Alpha
Ulterior Motive		.934
	Do you believe that they really want to protect the lives of X people? (RC)	.899
	Do you believe that they truly think the lives of X people are important? (RC)	.900
	Do you believe that they don’t care about X people?	.927
	Do you believe that they have an ulterior motive?	.927
Type of Person		.700
	They are dangerous?	.290
	They are a good person? (RC)	.538
Harmful to Share		.908
	They are working to improve society? (RC)	.938
	Sharing such views causes harm to society?	.831
	Sharing such views creates more hate in society?	.830
Censorship		.843
	They should be able to share their views publicly? (RC)	.819
	Someone should shut them up?	.795

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They should be able to speak freely? (RC)	.814
People should not have to be exposed to such things in public places?	.796
Their views should be celebrated? (RC)	.858
Children should be protected from their views?	.819

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*Note.* The fifth item consisted of one item (In your opinion, do people mainly say "X lives matter" to signal their political allegiance?), so it was not included in this table. \*RC = Reverse Coded

**Potential Consequences.** Participants were asked to indicate their support of seven possible actions which should be carried out because the protester was sharing their view (they should be fired, the authorities should monitor their views, they should get an award, they should be on the local news, they should be publicly shamed, I wish someone would beat them up, they should be put in jail). Participants responded using a 6-point Likert scale (*Strongly Disagree* (1), *Disagree* (2), *Somewhat Disagree* (3), *Somewhat Agree* (4), *Agree* (5), *Strongly Agree* (6)).

**Procedure**

Participants were recruited via the survey site Amazon Mechanical Turk. Participants first read through the information sheet and had to indicate their consent after reading the consent form (See Appendix B). Those who continued to the questionnaire were first asked to indicate their level of identification towards both movements, and how much they agreed with the idea of ALM/BLM. Participants were also asked to explain their reasoning for their given level of identification in an open-ended text box for both movements. Participants then moved onto the main section of the study. Participants were randomly and evenly split into either an ALM or BLM condition. The conditions varied based on whether the protester in the given scenario was either a BLM or an ALM supporter. In each condition the participants were presented with a scenario:

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You are out in a public space and see someone wearing a t-shirt with the slogan "I support #All/BlackLivesMatter" and using a megaphone to broadcast their support for **All/Black Lives Matter** to the public.

Participants were then asked to answer 23 questions which targeted five areas which were hypothesised to be potential psychological factors which would predict participants support of censoring the protester. The 23 questions are displayed in Appendix B. In addition to the five measures (but included in the 23 questions), participants were also asked to indicate their support of seven possible actions which should be carried out because the protester was sharing their view (e.g., they should be fired). Finally, participants were asked to provide various demographic information.

## *Design*

An experimental design was applied in this study. Linear regressions were used to examine the possible relationships between the dependent variables and the response to the question "Do you identify with the movement "All/Black Lives Matter?". The dependent variables for these sets of analyses were the five measures and seven further actions. The independent variable was the response to the question "Do you support [group] lives matter?". When the mediation analyses were conducted, the dependent variable was the measure censorship, the independent variable was response of identity to ALM/BLM, and the mediator variables were the four other measures, and the seven further actions. The full questionnaire is shown in Appendix B.

## **Results**

Before analysis was conducted, attention checks were conducted to ensure that participants paid enough attention while completing the study. 15% ( $n = 74$ ) of participants were removed from the dataset, due to failing one (22% of all exclusions) or both attention checks. Once the dataset had been cleaned, the dataset consisted of nine demographic



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variables, five measures (consisting of 16 questions), seven variables relating to possible censorship actions, two short answer questions (used for attention checks), four variables assessing position on ALM and BLM, and a condition variable. Nine questions were transformed by reverse coding. To conduct the analyses of Study 2, all decisions of significant relationships were made using a significance level of  $\alpha = .05$ . The significance level of .05 was used, upon consideration of Labovitz (1968) criteria for selecting a significance level. All analyses were pre-registered.

### *Linear Regression Analyses*

To initially examine any interaction terms between each dependent variable and support for each movement within each condition multiple linear regression analyses were conducted.

**Belief that it is harmful to share views.** As predicted, when participants had a similar viewpoint to the protester, they believed sharing the view was less harmful. For example, ALM supporters said sharing the pro-ALM view was less harmful than ALM opponents said ( $\beta_1 = -0.469$ ,  $t(215) = -14.062$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and BLM supporters said sharing the pro-BLM protesters' views were less harmful than BLM opponents said ( $\beta_1 = -0.315$ ,  $t(211) = -8.430$ ,  $p < .001$ ; see Table 3 and Figure 5). Thus, people who disagree with either view were more likely to say it was harmful to share it publicly.

Furthermore, when participants supported the opposite viewpoint of the protester (i.e., a BLM supporting participant judging an ALM-supporting protester) they believed sharing was more harmful. ALM supporters judging BLM protesters thought sharing their views was more harmful than ALM opponents thought ( $\beta_1 = 0.186$ ,  $t(211) = 4.604$ ,  $p < .001$ ). BLM supporters thought that sharing ALM views was significantly more harmful than their opponents ( $\beta_1 = 0.295$ ,  $t(215) = 6.941$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Thus, people who endorsed one view were

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more likely to think the opposite view was potentially harmful – however, because many people endorse both views, this tendency was far weaker than the one above, where we directly measured people’s agreement with the view to be shared publicly.

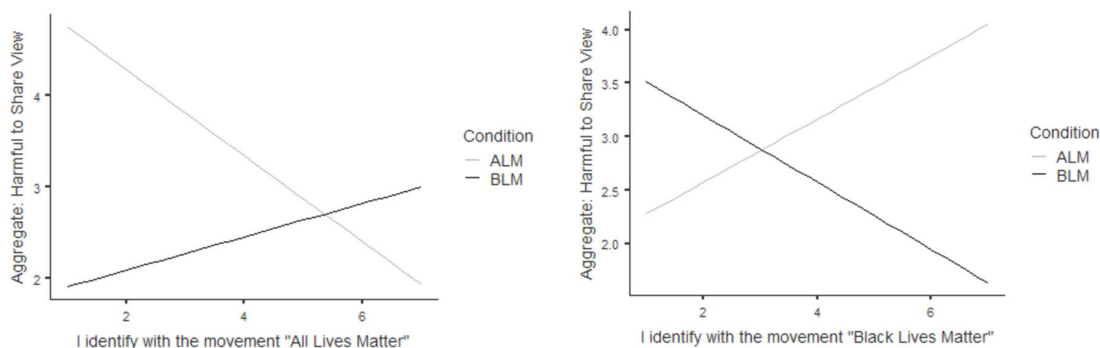
**Table 3**

*Comparison of marginal means for Perception of Harm within supporters of ALM and BLM with 95% CI*

Participant identification	Stance of Protester	1 SD Below Mean	Mean Level of Support	1SD Above Mean
a) Identifies with ALM	Pro-ALM	4.11 [3.89, 4.32]	3.10 [2.95, 3.26]	2.09 [1.87, 2.31]
	Pro-BLM	2.16 [1.93, 2.38]	2.55 [2.39, 2.71]	2.94 [2.72, 3.16]
b) Identifies with BLM	Pro-ALM	2.53 [2.30, 2.75]	3.15 [2.98, 3.32]	3.77 [3.54, 4.01]
	Pro-BLM	3.25 [3.00, 3.50]	2.59 [2.42, 2.76]	1.93 [1.70, 2.16]

**Figure 5**

*Belief that it is Harmful to Share Views as a function of support of the ALM and BLM movements*



*Note.* On both axes 1 = Strongly Disagree – 6 = Strongly Agree

**Perception that the Protester has an Ulterior Motive.** As predicted, when participants had a similar viewpoint to the protester, they thought that the protester had genuine reasons for protesting. For example, ALM opponents thought that the ALM-supporting protester had an ulterior motive for their actions, in comparison to ALM supporters who thought they had a genuine reason ( $\beta_1 = -0.543$ ,  $t(215) = -17.683$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Similarly, BLM opponents also agreed that the BLM-supporting protester had an ulterior motive, while the BLM opponents thought they had genuine reason ( $\beta_1 = -0.185$ ,  $t(211) = -5.529$ ,  $p < .001$ ; see Table 4 and Figure 6). Therefore, people who disagree with either view

### Attitudes Towards Censorship

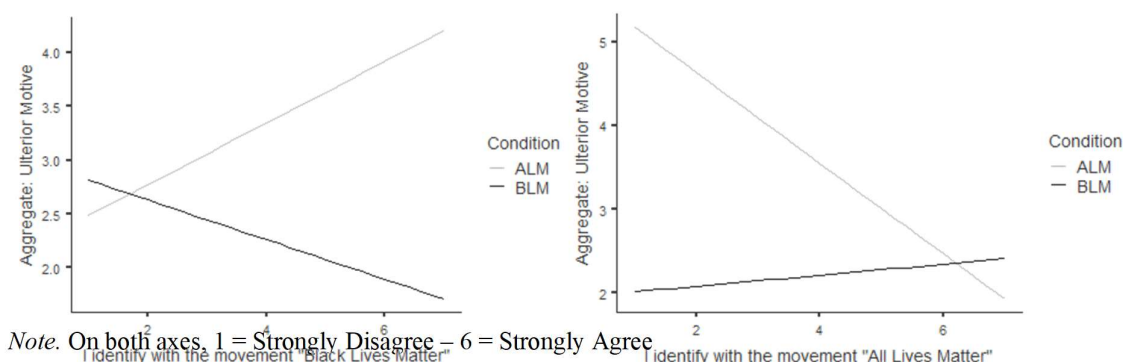
are more likely to perceive the protester as having an ulterior motive to explain their reasoning for protesting.

However, when participants supported the opposite viewpoint of the protester (i.e., a BLM supporting participant judging an ALM-supporting protester) the results were not so consistent. ALM supporters judging the BLM protester did not significantly differ in perception of an ulterior motive than the opponents of ALM ( $\beta_1 = 0.066$ ,  $t(211) = 1.889$ ,  $p = .06$ ). Both opponents and supporters of ALM in this condition disagreed that the BLM-supporting protester had an ulterior motive. However, BLM supporters thought that that the ALM-supporting protester had an ulterior motive for their actions significantly more than their opponents ( $\beta_1 = 0.282$ ,  $t(215) = 6.255$ ,  $p < .001$ ; see Table 4 and Figure 6). Thus, people who were not supportive of BLM did believe that the ALM-supporting protester had genuine reasons for their actions.

Based on the initial hypotheses, it was predicted that perception of ulterior motives would be symmetrical, such that people who identify with either movement will perceive someone from the alternate movement to have ulterior motives. In this sample, though, it was mainly the BLM supporters who perceived hidden motives, and not the ALM supporters. This result is inconsistent with the idea that conservatives are more prone to motivated

**Figure 6**

*Belief in an Ulterior Motive as a function of support of the ALM and BLM movements*



### Attitudes Towards Censorship

reasoning than liberals (Jost et al, 2003), and may possibly not generalize to other movements that liberals and conservatives have opposing views on. Further research would be required to make any such assessments.

**Table 4**

*Comparison of marginal means for Ulterior Motive within supporters of ALM and BLM with 95%CI*

Participant identification	Stance of Protester	1 SD Below Mean	Mean Level of Support	1SD Above Mean
a) Identifies with ALM	Pro-ALM	4.45 [4.26, 4.64]	3.28 [3.14, 3.42]	2.12 [1.92, 2.31]
	Pro-BLM	2.10 [1.90, 2.30]	2.24 [2.11, 2.38]	2.39 [2.19, 2.58]
b) Identifies with BLM	Pro-ALM	2.73 [2.50, 2.96]	3.34 [3.17, 3.50]	3.94 [3.70, 4.18]
	Pro-BLM	2.66 [2.41, 2.90]	2.27 [2.10, 2.43]	1.88 [1.65, 2.11]

**Agreement of Political Signaling.** As predicted, when participants disagreed with the protester's viewpoint, participants were more likely to believe that the protester was attempting to signal their political allegiance. Participants who had lower identification with the ALM movement agreed that the ALM-supporting protester was attempting to give a political signal, while supporters disagreed ( $\beta_1 = -0.277$ ,  $t(215) = -6.321$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Similarly, participants who had lower identification with the BLM movement also agreed that the BLM-supporting protester was attempting to give a political signal ( $\beta_1 = -0.234$ ,  $t(211) = -4.843$ ,  $p < .001$ , see Table 5 and Figure 7). Thus, people who disagree with either view were more likely to say that the protester is attempting to signal their political allegiance.

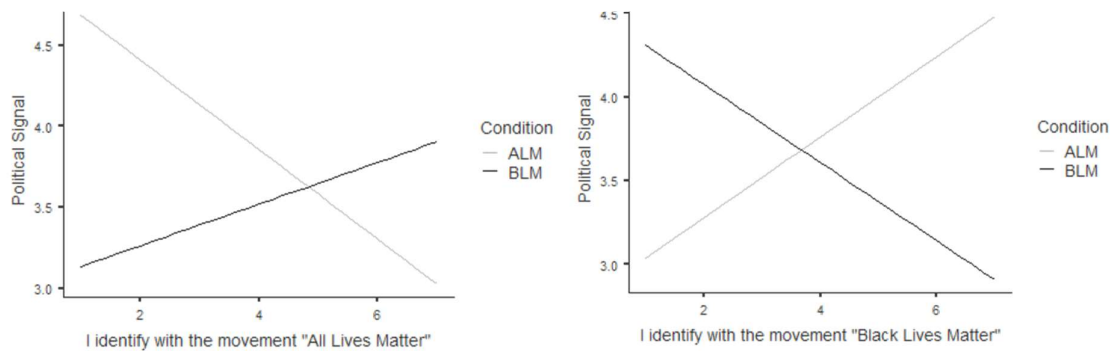
Notably, this psychological bias was observed in participants that had opposing views with the protester. As predicted, when participants had a different viewpoint to the protester, participants indicated a greater level of agreement that the protester was attempting to signal their political allegiance. For example, participants with greater ALM identification, on average, indicated that the BLM-supporting protester was attempting to give a political signal in comparison to ALM opponents ( $\beta_1 = 0.129$ ,  $t(211) = 2.625$ ,  $p = .009$ ). Participants who had greater BLM identification also indicated that they thought the ALM-supporting protester

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was giving a political signal, while opponents of the BLM movement disagreed ( $\beta_1 = 0.240$ ,  $t(215) = 5.257$ ,  $p < .001$ ; see Table 5 and Figure 7). Thus, people who endorsed one statement were more likely to think the protester with an opposing view was attempting to signal their political allegiance.

**Figure 7**

*Belief in Political Signaling as a function of support of the ALM and BLM movements*



*Note.* On both axes 1 = Strongly Disagree – 6 = Strongly Agree

**Table 5**

*Comparison of marginal means for Political Signal within supporters of ALM and BLM with 95%CI*

Participant identification	Stance of Protester	1 SD Below Mean	Mean Level of Support	1SD Above Mean
a) Identifies with ALM	Pro-ALM	4.31 [4.04, 4.58]	3.71 [3.52, 3.91]	3.12 [2.84, 3.39]
	Pro-BLM	3.31 [3.03, 3.59]	3.59 [3.39, 3.78]	3.86 [3.58, 4.14]
b) Identifies with BLM	Pro-ALM	3.24 [2.98, 3.51]	3.75 [3.56, 3.94]	4.26 [3.98, 4.54]
	Pro-BLM	4.11 [3.82, 4.40]	3.62 [3.42, 3.81]	3.12 [2.85, 3.40]

**Negative Perceptions of the Protester.** As predicted, when participants had a similar viewpoint to the protester, they viewed the protester more positively. For example, ALM supporters disagreed that the ALM-supporting protester was a dangerous or bad person while the ALM opponents agreed they were dangerous and bad ( $\beta_1 = -0.377$ ,  $t(215) = -14.283$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Moreover, BLM supporters indicated that the BLM-supporting protester was not dangerous or bad, while BLM opponents thought they were ( $\beta_1 = -0.293$ ,  $t(211) = -7.907$ ,  $p <$

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.001; see Table 6 and Figure 8). Thus, people who disagree with either movement are likely to have negative perceptions of the supportive protester.

When participants supported the opposite viewpoint of the protester (i.e., a BLM supporting participant judging an ALM-supporting protester) the relationship was not quite as clear as was predicted. While BLM supporters had a more negative perception of the ALM-supporter than their opponents ( $\beta_1 = 0.227$ ,  $t(215) = 6.649$ ,  $p < .001$ ), ALM supporters, judging the BLM-supporting protester, did not significantly differ in perception of the protester in comparison to ALM-opponents ( $\beta_1 = 0.089$ ,  $t(211) = 2.417$ ,  $p = .017$ ). Thus, people who were not supportive of BLM were less likely to have negative perceptions of the ALM-supporting protester.

Based on the initial hypotheses, it was predicted that negative perception of the protester would be symmetrical, such that people the identify with either movement will perceive someone from the alternate movement more negatively. In this sample, though, it was mainly the BLM supporters who held negative perceptions, and not the ALM supporters. This result is inconsistent with the idea that high in-group identification results in increased negative perception towards out-group members (Kelly, 1993). It would be interesting to further examine possible mechanisms behind this result as it may possibly be connected to the underlying reason of the formation of the two movements. As BLM was created as a response to the threat of violence towards black individuals by authority figures, BLM members may generally hold a greater initial negative perception towards anyone who appears to be attempting to reduce fair and equal treatment towards members of their ingroup

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(Lebron, 2017). Whereas, the ALM movement formed as a response to BLM, and not based on any initial existing threat directed towards ALM in-group members.

**Table 6**

*Comparison of marginal means for Bad Person within supporters of ALM and BLM with 95%CI*

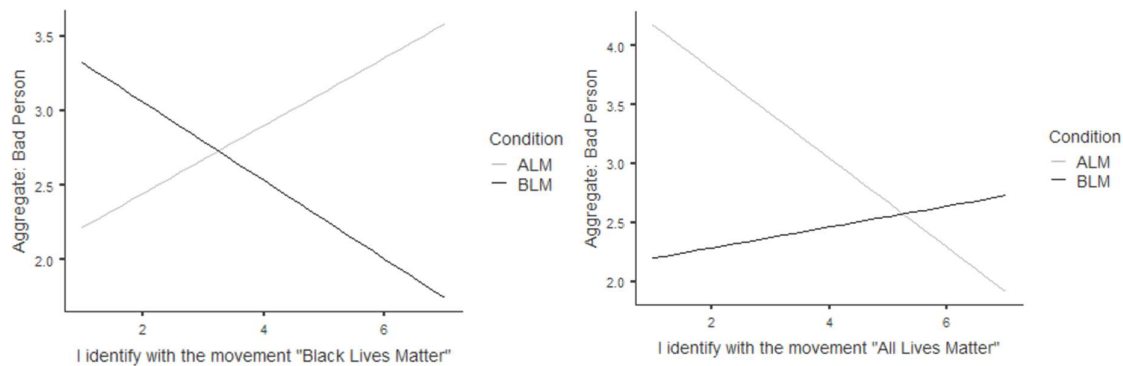
Participant identification	Stance of Protester	1 SD Below Mean	Mean Level of Support	1 SD Above Mean
a) Identifies with ALM	Pro-ALM	3.67 [3.48, 3.85]	2.85 [2.72, 2.99]	2.04 [1.85, 2.23]
	Pro-BLM	2.32 [2.13, 2.51]	2.51 [2.37, 2.64]	2.70 [2.51, 2.89]
b) Identifies with BLM	Pro-ALM	2.41 [2.22, 2.60]	2.89 [2.75, 3.03]	3.37 [3.17, 3.57]

Pro-BLM

**Support of censorship.** As predicted, when participants had an opposing view to the protester, they were more likely to be supportive of censoring their protest. Participants who

**Figure 8**

*Perception of Type of Person as a function of support of the ALM and BLM movements*



*Note.* On both axes 1 = Strongly Disagree – 6 = Strongly Agree

had greater identification with the ALM movement wanted less censorship of the ALM-supporting protester ( $\beta_1 = -0.201$ ,  $t(215) = -7.296$ ,  $p < .001$ ), while similarly, participants who had greater identification with the BLM movement also wanted less censorship of the BLM-supporting protester ( $\beta_1 = -0.097$ ,  $t(211) = -3.116$ ,  $p < .01$ , see Table 7 and Figure 9). Thus, people who disagree with either view are more likely to support censoring the protester.

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When participants had a different viewpoint to the protester, they were more supportive of censorship. For example, participants with greater ALM identification supported the censorship of the BLM-supporting protester to a greater extent than ALM opponents ( $\beta_1 = 0.140$ ,  $t(211) = 4.725$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Participants who had greater BLM identification were also more supportive of censoring the ALM-supporting protester than the opponents of BLM ( $\beta_1 = 0.202$ ,  $t(215) = 7.150$ ,  $p < .001$ ; see Table 3 and Figure 2). Thus, people who disagreed with one view were more likely to support censoring a supportive protester with an opposing view (i.e. low BLM identifying participants are more likely to support censoring a BLM-supporting protester).

The result that participants are more likely to support censorship when they have opposing views to the protester is proposed to be connected to the results mentioned above for each of the four other measures. When measuring the perception that it is harmful for the protester to share their view and that the protester is attempting to give a political signal, there is significant relationship across both conditions when the protester has an opposing view to the participants. Furthermore, when measuring negative perception of the protester and the perception that the protester has an ulterior motive, there are significant relationships when participants have opposing views when there is an ALM-supporting protester. When relating all the measures to the measure of censorship, this supports our initial hypothesis – when the participant believes the protester has an ulterior motive, may cause harm, is a bad person, and is attempting to give a political signal then support of censorship will be observed. This outcome is observed, fully, when assessing supporters of the BLM movement that are presented with a ALM-supporting protester, and partially observed when assessing supporters of the ALM movement that are presented with a BLM-supporting protester.

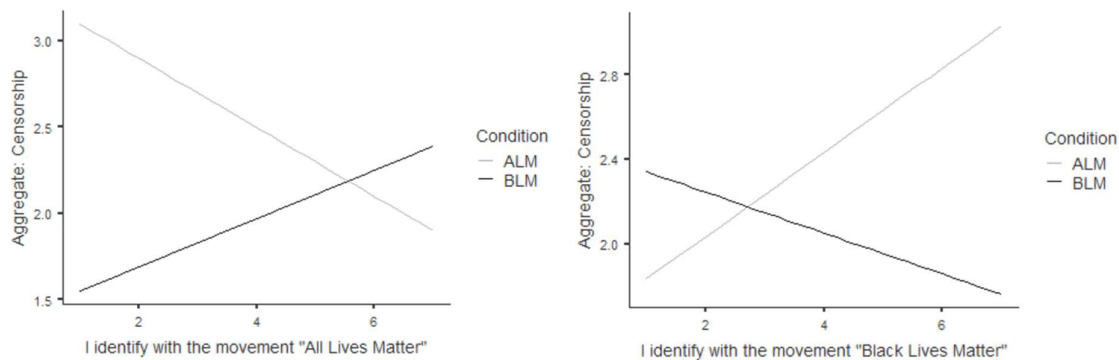


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Furthermore, the result that when participants had a similar view to the protester, they were less likely to support censorship, is also proposed to be related to the previously reported results of Study 2. Across both conditions for all four measures, the results ran as predicted. When participants were presented with a protester who shared their view point they were less likely to think that it was harmful for the protester to share their view, that they had an ulterior motive, that the protester was attempting to give a political signal, and that they were a bad person.

**Figure 9**

*Support of Censorship as a function of support of the ALM and BLM movements*



*Note.* On both axes 1 = Strongly Disagree – 6 = Strongly Agree

**Table 7**

*Comparison of marginal means for Censorship within supporters of ALM and BLM with 95% CI*

Participant identification	Stance of Protester	1 SD Below Mean	Mean Level of Support	1SD Above Mean
a) Identifies with ALM	Pro-ALM	2.83 [2.66, 2.99]	2.40 [2.28, 2.52]	1.97 [1.80, 2.14]
	Pro-BLM	1.74 [1.56, 1.91]	2.04 [1.92, 2.16]	2.34 [2.17, 2.51]
b) Identifies with BLM	Pro-ALM	2.00 [1.84, 2.17]	2.43 [2.30, 2.55]	2.85 [2.67, 3.02]
	Pro-BLM	2.26 [2.08, 2.44]	2.05 [1.93, 2.18]	1.85 [1.68, 2.02]

**Support of Potential Consequences for the Protester.** Seven different possible reactions were posed to participants (the protester being sent to jail, getting fired from their job, getting beat up, be publicly shamed, have their views monitored by the government, given an award, and getting shown on the local news show) as response for protesting. As

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displayed in Table 7, across both conditions, without considering difference in identification to the movement, the most common response to any of the responses to the protester sharing their view was to strongly disagree the reaction.

The only exceptions to this were that the most common response was to agree that the BLM-supporting protester should be shown on the local news, and participants most often only disagreed (appose to strongly disagreed) that the BLM-supporting protester should get an award. The response to the BLM-supporting protester being shown on the news, may not be very informative as in hindsight, the question posed to participants (“They should be on the local news?”) could have been interpreted as either in a positive light or a negative light.

**Table 8**

*Descriptive Statistics of Reactions to Protester*

	Condition	Jail	Fired	Beat Them Up	Monitor Views	Shamed	News	Award
Mean	ALM	1.52	1.64	1.58	2.34	2.18	2.63	2.15
	BLM	1.54	1.55	1.53	2.27	1.73	3.15	2.75
Median	ALM	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
	BLM	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	3.00	3.00
Mode	ALM	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	BLM	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	4.00	2.00
Standard deviation	ALM	0.979	1.04	1.06	1.37	1.44	1.55	1.35
	BLM	1.04	1.02	1.00	1.40	1.19	1.47	1.42

However, when comparing level of support for the various reactions to the protesting by identification to the movement there were some notable difference between participants.

***Support Jailing the Protester.*** When assessing support of jailing the protester, there was not a significant difference in opinion when participants were viewing the protester who had a similar viewpoint to themselves. For example, there was not a significant difference in opinion between ALM supporters or opponents about whether the pro-ALM protester should

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go to jail ( $\beta_1 = -0.022$ ,  $t(215) = -0.709$ ,  $p = .479$ ). Neither was there was not a significant difference in support to send the BLM-supporting protester to jail based on identification with the BLM movement ( $\beta_1 = -0.054$ ,  $t(211) = 1.559$ ,  $p = .121$ ; see Table 9 and Figure 10). As there was extremely little variation in level of support of jailing the protester across the whole sample (see Table 8), it is not surprising that there was not an observable difference. Thus, when people assess a protester who differ in opinion for an issue that is salient to them, they are not likely to support sending them to jail.

As predicted, when participants had a different viewpoint to the protester, there was slight difference in support of sending them to jail. For example, when ALM supporting participants were presented with the BLM-supporting protester, there was a significant difference in support level to those that opposed the ALM movement ( $\beta_1 = 0.125$ ,  $t(211) = 3.806$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Furthermore, BLM supporters judging the ALM-supporting protester were slightly more in support of sending the protester to jail than BLM opponents thought ( $\beta_1 = 0.114$ ,  $t(215) = 3.801$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Thus, people who endorsed one view were more slightly more supportive of jailing the protester. However, as shown on Table 8, while the difference is significant on average response is between disagreeing with jailing the protester to strongly disagreeing.

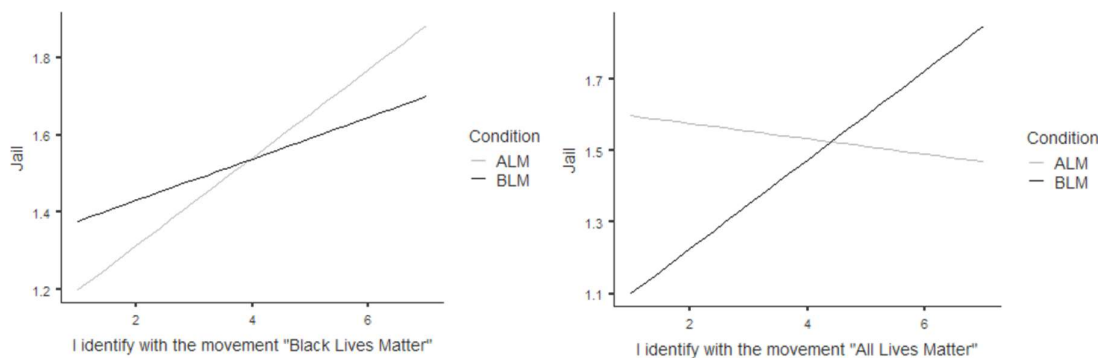
**Table 9**

*Comparison of marginal means for Support of Jailing Protester within supporters of ALM and BLM with 95%CI*

Participant identification	Stance of Protester	1 SD Below Mean	Mean level of Support	1SD Above Mean
a) Identifies with ALM	Pro-ALM	1.57 [1.38, 1.75]	1.52 [1.39, 1.66]	1.48 [1.29, 1.66]
	Pro-BLM	1.27 [1.08, 1.46]	1.54 [1.40, 1.67]	1.81 [1.62, 2.00]
b) Identifies with BLM	Pro-ALM	1.30 [1.11, 1.48]	1.54 [1.40, 1.67]	1.78 [1.59, 1.97]
	Pro-BLM	1.42 [1.23, 1.62]	1.54 [1.40, 1.67]	1.65 [1.46, 1.84]

**Figure 10**

*Support of sending the protester to jail as a function of support of the ALM and BLM*



*Note.* On both axes 1 = Strongly Disagree – 6 = Strongly Agree

***Support of Getting the Protester Fired.*** When assessing support of firing the protester, within participants that shared viewpoints with the protester, the relationship was not quite as clear as was predicted. While participants that identified with the ALM movement disagreed that the ALM-supporting protester should be fired slightly less than those who did not identify with the movement ( $\beta_1 = -0.086$ ,  $t(215) = -2.727$ ,  $p = .007$ ), this was not seen when examining the BLM condition. There was not a significant difference in support to fire the BLM-supporting protester based on identification with the BLM movement ( $\beta_1 = 0.010$ ,  $t(211) = 0.298$ ,  $p = .766$ ; see Table 10 and Figure 11). Thus, people who disagree with ALM were more slightly more supportive of firing the protester. However, on average the response falls between strongly disagreeing and disagreeing to fire the protester (Table 10).

As predicted, when participants had a differing viewpoint to the protester, there was slight difference in support of getting the protester fired for sharing their view. For example, when ALM supporting participants were presented with the BLM-supporting protester, there was a significant difference in support level to those that opposed the ALM movement, where participants who identified with the ALM movement were slightly more in favor of firing the protester than opponents of ALM ( $\beta_1 = 0.145$ ,  $t(211) = 4.543$ ,  $p < .001$ ; see Table 10 and

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Figure 11). Furthermore, BLM supporters judging the ALM-supporting protester showed slightly greater support to getting the protester fired than BLM opponents ( $\beta_1 = 0.135$ ,  $t(215) = 4.286$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Thus, people who endorsed one view were slightly more likely to support firing a protester with an opposing view. However, as shown on Table 10, while the difference is significant on average response is between disagreeing with firing the protester to strongly disagreeing. While there were significant differences observed within all conditions, overall no one was in support of firing the protester for publicly sharing their viewpoint.

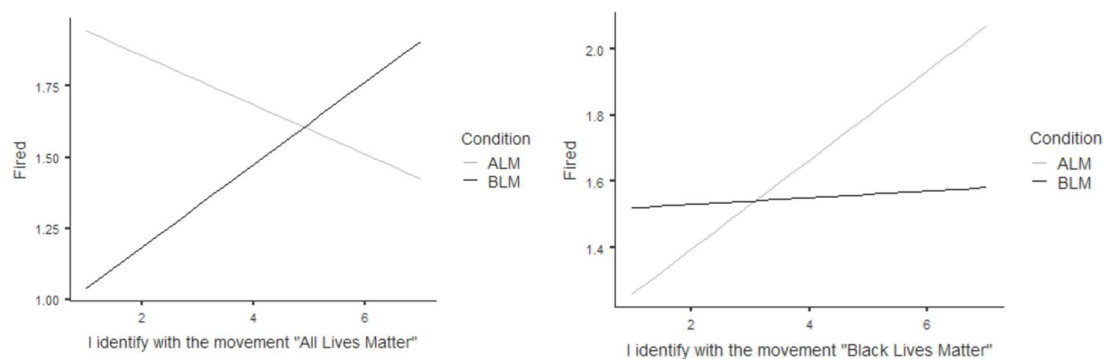
**Table 10**

*Comparison of marginal means for Support of Getting the Protester Fired within supporters of ALM and BLM with 95%CI*

Participant identification	Stance of Protester	1 SD Below Mean	Mean level of Support	1SD Above Mean
a) Identifies with ALM	Pro-ALM	1.83 [1.64, 2.01]	1.64 [1.51, 1.77]	1.45 [1.27, 1.64]
	Pro-BLM	1.24 [1.04, 1.43]	1.55 [1.41, 1.68]	1.86 [1.67, 2.05]
b) Identifies with BLM	Pro-ALM	1.37 [1.19, 1.56]	1.66 [1.52, 1.79]	1.95 [1.75, 2.14]
	Pro-BLM	1.53 [1.33, 1.73]	1.55 [1.41, 1.69]	1.57 [1.38, 1.76]

**Figure 11**

*Support of getting the protester fired as a function of support of the ALM and BLM movements*



*Note.* On both axes 1 = Strongly Disagree – 6 = Strongly Agree

***Support of Publicly Shaming the Protester.*** When assessing support of publicly shaming the protester, within participants that shared viewpoints with the protester, the relationship was not quite as clear as was predicted. While participants that identified with the ALM movement disagreed that the ALM-supporting protester should be publicly shamed slightly more than those who did not identify with the movement ( $\beta_1 = -0.279$ ,  $t(215) = -6.881$ ,  $p < .001$ ), this was not seen when examining the BLM condition. There was not a significant difference in support to publicly shame the BLM-supporting protester based on identification with the BLM movement ( $\beta_1 = 0.002$ ,  $t(211) = 0.039$ ,  $p = .969$ ; see Table 11 and Figure 12). Thus, people who disagree with ALM were more slightly more supportive of publicly shaming the ALM-supporting protester.

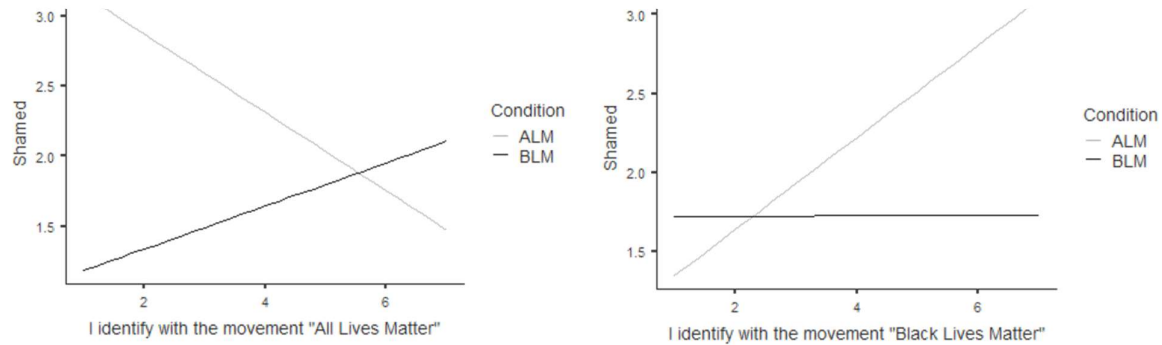
As predicted, when participants had a differing viewpoint to the protester, there was slight difference in support of publicly shaming the protester for sharing their view. For example, when ALM supporting participants were slightly more in favour of publicly shaming the BLM-supporting protester, while participants that opposed the ALM movement did not support publicly shaming the protester ( $\beta_1 = 0.154$ ,  $t(211) = 4.105$ ,  $p < .001$ ; see Figure 12). Furthermore, BLM supporters judging the ALM-supporting protester showed greater support of publicly shaming the protester than BLM opponents ( $\beta_1 = 0.292$ ,  $t(215) = 7.119$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Thus, people who endorsed one view were slightly more likely to support publicly shaming the protester with an opposing view. However, as shown on Table 11, while the difference is significant on average response is between somewhat disagreeing with firing the protester to strongly disagreeing.

*Note.* On both axes 1 = Strongly Disagree – 6 = Strongly Agree

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**Figure 12**

*Support of publicly shaming the protester as a function of support of the ALM and BLM movements*

**Table 11**

*Comparison of marginal means for Support of Publicly Shaming the Protester within supporters of ALM and BLM with 95%CI*

Participant identification	Stance of Protester	1 SD Below Mean	Mean level of Support	1SD Above Mean
a) Identifies with ALM	Pro-ALM	2.77 [2.54, 3.00]	2.17 [2.00, 2.33]	1.57 [1.34, 1.80]
	Pro-BLM	1.39 [1.15, 1.63]	1.72 [1.56, 1.89]	2.05 [1.82, 2.29]
b) Identifies with BLM	Pro-ALM	1.59 [1.36, 1.82]	2.21 [2.04, 2.38]	2.83 [2.59, 3.07]
	Pro-BLM	1.72 [1.47, 1.97]	1.73 [1.56, 1.89]	1.73 [1.50, 1.96]

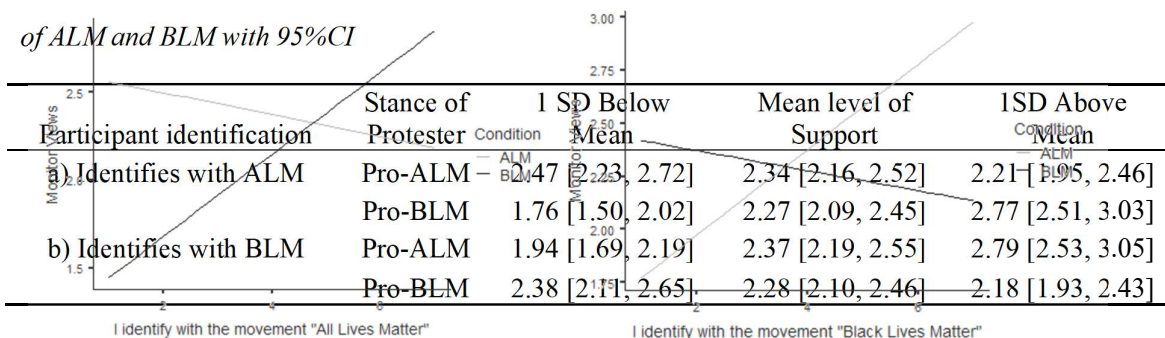
**Support of Monitoring the Views of the Protester.** This relationship was not quite as clear when the participants were facing the protester that was sharing a similar viewpoint to themselves. While participants that did not identify with the ALM movement agreed that the protester should have their views monitored slightly more than those who did identify with the movement ( $\beta_1 = -0.279$ ,  $t(215) = -6.881$ ,  $p < .001$ ), this was not seen when examining the BLM condition. There was not a significant difference in support to monitor the views of the BLM-supporting protester based on identification with the BLM movement ( $\beta_1 = -0.047$ ,  $t(211) = -1.008$ ,  $p = .315$ ; see Table 12 and Figure 13). Thus, people who disagreed with the ALM movement were more slightly more supportive of monitoring the views of the BLM-supporting protester.

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As predicted, when participants had a differing viewpoint to the protester, there was slight differences in support of getting the authorities to monitor the views of the BLM-supporting protester. For example, ALM supporting participants were slightly more in favour of the authorities monitoring the views of the BLM-supporting protester, while participants that opposed the ALM movement were not supportive of this action ( $\beta_1 = 0.154$ ,  $t(211) = 4.105$ ,  $p < .001$ ; see Figure 13). Furthermore, BLM supporters judging the ALM-supporting protester showed greater support of having the authorities monitor the views of the protester than BLM opponents ( $\beta_1 = 0.201$ ,  $t(215) = 4.917$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Thus, people who disagree with either view are more likely to support the authorities monitoring the views of the protester. However, again, it is important to note that while there is significant differences with the conditions, the average response fell between strongly disagreeing to monitoring views, to somewhat disagree, so on the whole, people are opposed to the authorities monitoring anyone's views.

**Figure 13**

Support of monitoring the views of the protester as a function of support of the ALM and BLM movements



Note. On both axes 1 = Strongly Disagree – 6 = Strongly Agree

**Support of Showing the Protester on the Local News.** As discussed above, how participants interpreted this question brings the interpretation of this question into dispute. In hindsight, the question should have been worded with less ambiguity (e.g. They should be on the local news to praise their actions?). However, the results obtained may still provide some



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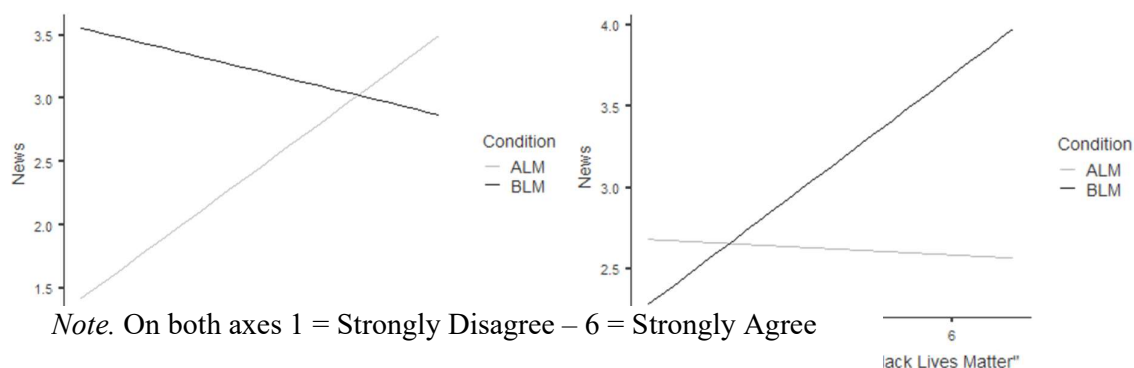
insight. It was predicted that when participants had a differing viewpoint to the protester, participants would more strongly disagree that the protester should be shown on the local news – based on the theory that this was a positive reaction to the protester sharing their view.

The results partially supported the predictions. when participants had a similar viewpoint to the protester, they more supportive of showing the protester on the local news. For example, ALM supporters were slightly more supportive of showing the ALM-supporting protester on the local new than ALM opponents ( $\beta_1 = 0.346$ ,  $t(215) = 8.248$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and BLM supporters were also more supportive of showing the BLM-supporting protester on the news than BLM opponents ( $\beta_1 = 0.283$ ,  $t(211) = 6.263$ ,  $p < .001$ ; see Table 13 and Figure 14). Thus, people who agree with either view are more likely to support the protester being shown on the local news.

However, when participants supported the opposite viewpoint of the protester (i.e., a BLM supporting participant judging an ALM-supporting protester) there was not a significant difference in opinion to showing the protester on the news between people who identified with either the ALM or the BLM movement. ALM supporters judging the BLM-

**Figure 14**

*Support of showing the protester on the local news as a function of support of the ALM and BLM movements*



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supporting protester did not have a significant difference in view than ALM opponents ( $\beta_1 = -0.114$ ,  $t(211) = -2.404$ ,  $p = .017$ ). BLM supporters judging the ALM-supporting protester did not have a significant difference in view than BLM opponents thought ( $\beta_1 = -0.019$ ,  $t(215) = -0.389$ ,  $p = .698$ ; see Table 13 and Figure 14). Thus, no one supports showing a protester from an opposing movement on the local news.

**Table 13**

*Comparison of marginal means for Showing the protester on the local news within supporters of ALM and BLM with 95%CI*

Participant identification	Stance of Protester	1 SD Below Mean	Mean level of Support	1SD Above Mean
a) Identifies with ALM	Pro-ALM	1.89 [1.63, 2.15]	2.63 [2.45, 2.82]	3.38 [3.11, 3.64]
	Pro-BLM	3.40 [3.13, 3.67]	3.15 [2.96, 3.34]	2.91 [2.64, 3.18]
b) Identifies with BLM	Pro-ALM	2.66 [2.40, 2.93]	2.62 [2.43, 2.82]	2.58 [2.30, 2.86]
	Pro-BLM	2.52 [2.23, 2.81]	3.12 [2.92, 3.31]	3.71 [3.44, 3.99]

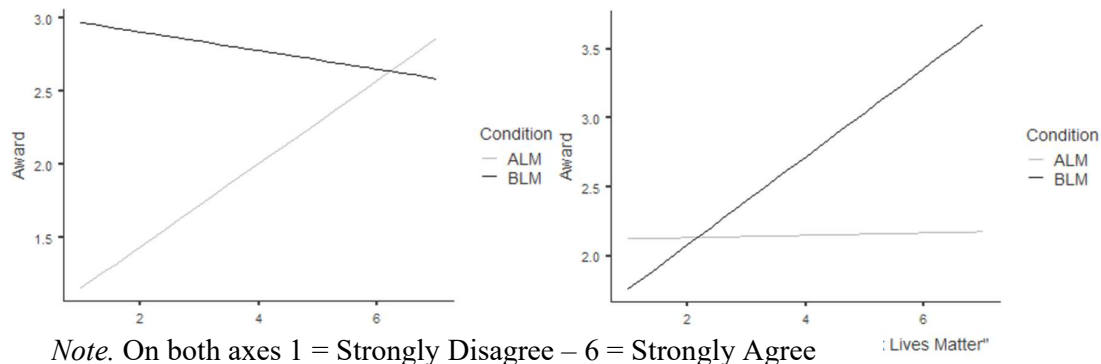
***Support of Giving the Protester and Award.*** The results supported the predictions that when participants agreed with the protester, they indicated greater agreement to giving the protester an award. For example, ALM supporters were slightly more supportive of giving the pro-ALM an award than the ALM opponents ( $\beta_1 = 0.285$ ,  $t(215) = 7.700$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Furthermore, BLM supporters were slightly more supportive of giving the pro-BLM an award than the BLM opponents said ( $\beta_1 = 0.320$ ,  $t(211) = 7.587$ ,  $p < .001$ ; see Table 13 and Figure 11). Thus, people that agree with either statement are more likely to support giving the protester an award as recognition for their actions.

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However, when participants supported the opposite viewpoint of the protester (i.e., a BLM supporting participant judging an ALM-supporting protester) there was not a significant difference in viewpoint between identification towards neither the ALM nor the BLM movement. ALM supporters judging BLM protesters did not have a significant difference in view than ALM opponents towards giving the protester an award ( $\beta_1 = -0.064$ ,  $t(211) = -1.377$ ,  $p = .170$ ). BLM supporters judging the ALM-supporting protester did not have a significant difference in view than BLM opponents ( $\beta_1 = 0.005$ ,  $t(215) = 0.043$ ,  $p = .906$ ; see Table 14 and Figure 15). Thus, when people have opposing views to the protester, no one will support giving the protester an award.

**Figure 15**

*Support of giving the protester an award as a function of support of the ALM and BLM movements*



**Table 14**

*Comparison of marginal means for giving the protester an award within supporters of ALM and BLM with 95%CI*

Participant identification	Stance of Protester	1 SD Below Mean	Mean level of Support	1SD Above Mean
a) Identifies with ALM	Pro-ALM	1.54 [1.30, 1.79]	2.15 [1.98, 2.33]	2.77 [2.52, 3.01]
	Pro-BLM	2.88 [2.63, 3.14]	2.75 [2.57, 2.92]	2.61 [2.36, 3.14]
b) Identifies with BLM	Pro-ALM	2.13 [1.89, 2.37]	2.15 [1.97, 2.33]	2.17 [1.92, 2.42]
	Pro-BLM	2.03 [1.77, 2.29]	2.70 [2.53, 2.88]	3.38 [3.14, 3.63]

**Full Model**

After analyzing each predictor of censorship individually, it was found that the perception that it is harmful for the protester to share their views and that the protester is attempting to give a political signal led to censorship in both conditions. However, perception that the protester had an ulterior motive and negative perception of the protester only led to censorship in one condition. Therefore, a model using all four predictors of censorship was tested, to compare the unique contributions of each predictor of censorship, over and above the other predictors. A regression analysis would allow us to assess which variables may have the greatest explanatory power in predicting censorship. The model was run four times, one for each condition and level of support for the two movements. The coefficients and significance levels of each model are displayed in Table 15.

Perception of harm was a significant predictor ( $p < .01$ ) for each model. This result suggests that no matter what your stance on the two movements is, when a person perceives a risk of harm through the action of protesting, everyone is more likely to support censoring the protester. The perception that the protester was a bad person was significant in all models, except for in the ALM condition model, for identification to the BLM movement ( $p = .015$ ). Thus, suggesting that for participants who identify with the BLM movement, and are judging an ALM-supporting protester, if a negative perception is formed, this will not significantly increase the likelihood of supporting the censorship of the protester. Ulterior motive was only significant in one model, as shown in Table 15. Thus, suggesting that for participants who identify with ALM, when presented with a BLM-supporting protester, the perception that they have an ulterior motive will significantly increase their support of censorship. However, for the other conditions, perception that the protester has an ulterior motive will not significantly increase support of censorship.

**Table 15***Full Model Coefficients and Significance levels*

Model Configuration		Measure Coefficients			
Model	Identification	Harmful to	Bad Person	Ulterior	Political
Condition	with movement	Share		Motive	Signal
Pro-BLM	ID with BLM	.369 **	.241 **	.158	-.036
Pro-BLM	ID with ALM	.266 **	.209 *	.198 *	-.062
Pro-ALM	ID with ALM	.265 **	.239 *	.129	.003
Pro-ALM	ID with BLM	.226 *	.197	.052	-.005

*Note.* \*  $p < .01$  and \*\*  $p < .001$  significance.

The result that perception of political signaling was not significant in any of the models indicates that perceived political signaling does not influence whether a person is likely to support censorship or not. It is possible that this result is non-significant because there is already a high level of perceived partisanship association with the two movements (Democrats in support of BLM and Republicans ALM, as seen in Study 1). Thus, political partisanship may be easily implied based on an individual's viewpoint. Which may also help explain why perception of an ulterior motive was only significant in one condition – because the apparent reasoning for supporting either movement is highly partisan, people do not need to form their own assumptions of members of the movements. If a small, unknown movement was being protested, this measure may possibly increase the significance as observers will have to form their own opinion, compared to using existing popular beliefs.

The finding that all models included the significant measure that it is harmful to share their view followed the results observed when examining the measures individually. The finding that negative perception of the protester was significant in all models except one, also followed the previous results. However, the finding that the measure of ulterior motive was only a significant predictor of censorship with people identifying with the ALM movement,

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when presented with the BLM-supporting protester, was surprising as this was the only condition that returned a non-significant finding when examining the measures individually. Furthermore, it was also surprising that perception of a political signal was not observed to be significant in any of the four full models, because when the measures were examined individually, it was significant in each condition. It should be noted that the any interpretations gained from should be viewed with slight caution as the tolerance factor was only slightly above .2 for some variables, thus indicating that there may be some shared explanatory power within the measures.

### *Mediation Analyses*

Bootstrap analyses (1000 resamples) was used to test the mediation role of each dependent in explaining the relationship between identity and censorship. Correlations were first run between identity to ALM and BLM, and each of the five measures, to ensure the assumptions required to conduct mediation analysis were met. The correlation matrixes of participants in the ALM and BLM conditions is displayed in Appendix C and D respectively.

**Ulterior Motive.** Ulterior motive was a significant mediator variable between ID with ALM and censorship of the ALM-supporting protester, and ID with BLM and censorship for the BLM-supporting protester. Thus, possibly acting as the psychological bias, favouring in-group members. Belief in an ulterior motive partially mediated the relationship between ID with BLM and censorship of the ALM-supporting protester. But it did not act as a mediator between ID with ALM and censorship of the BLM-protester. The directions of the relationships followed our initial predications – when observing a protester that has opposing views to yourself, participants are generally more likely to believe that they must have an ulterior motive for being out protesting, and furthermore increased support of censorship.

Belief that the ALM-supporting protester had an ulterior motive mediated the relationship between identification with ALM and censorship, as there was a significant

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indirect path ( $z = -7.14, p < .001$ ), and a non-significant direct path ( $z = 1.01, p = .313$ ). As identification with the ALM movement decreased, belief that the ALM-supporting protester had an ulterior motive increased ( $b = -0.541, SE = 0.030, p < .001$ ), and in turn, the greater the belief that the protester had an ulterior motive, the higher the level of support of censorship ( $b = 0.438, SE = 0.054, p < .001$ ).

However, when examining the mediation effect of an ulterior motive only partially mediates the relationship between identification with BLM and censorship of the ALM-supporting protester, as both the indirect and direct paths are significant ( $z = 5.03, p < .001$ ;  $z = 3.43, p < .001$  respectively). As identification with the BLM movement increased, belief that the ALM-supporting protester has an ulterior motive also increased ( $b = 0.286, SE = 0.047, p < .001$ ), and in turn, as belief in an ulterior motive increased, the greater the support of censorship ( $b = 0.335, SE = 0.045, p < .001$ ).

There was not significant evidence that belief that the BLM-supporting protester has an ulterior motive mediates support of censorship and identification with the ALM movement, as the indirect path is not significant ( $z = 1.82, p = .069$ ). However, this was not the case when examining whether belief in an ulterior motive mediates identification with the BLM movement and support of censorship of the BLM-supporting protester. There was a significant indirect path ( $z = -4.837, p < .001$ ), and a non-significant direct path ( $z = 0.429, p = .668$ ). As identification with the BLM movement decreased, belief that the BLM protester has an ulterior motive increased ( $b = -0.185, SE = 0.038, p < .001$ ), and in turn, the greater the belief that the protester has an ulterior motive, the higher the level of support of censorship ( $b = 0.582, SE = 0.055, p < .001$ ).

**Political Signal.** Belief that the ALM-supporting protester was attempting to give a political signal partially mediated the relationship between identification with ALM and BLM and censorship. There was no significant mediation of belief that the BLM-supporting

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protester was giving a political signal, between identification with BLM or ALM and censorship. Thus, our predictions were only partially supported.

Belief that the ALM-supporting protester was giving a political signal partially mediates the relationship between identification with ALM and censorship, as both the indirect and direct paths are significant ( $z = -2.74, p = .006$ ;  $z = -4.89, p < .001$  respectively). As identification with the ALM movement decreased, belief that the ALM-supporting protester was giving a political signal increased ( $b = -0.274, SE = 0.049, p < .001$ ), and in turn, as belief in political signalling increased, the greater the support of censorship ( $b = 0.157, SE = 0.049, p < .001$ ).

There was not significant evidence that belief that the pro-BLM protester was attempting to give a political signal mediated support of censorship and identification with neither the ALM nor the BLM movement, as the indirect path is not significant ( $z = 1.82, p = .069$ ;  $z = 1.90, p = .058$  respectively).

When examining the mediation effect of belief that the ALM-supporting protester was attempting to signal their political allegiance by protesting, it was observed that it only partially mediated the relationship between identification with BLM and censorship, as both the indirect and direct paths were significant ( $z = 2.09, p = .004$ ;  $z = 4.81, p < .001$  respectively). As identification with the BLM movement increased, belief that the ALM-supporting protester is giving a political signal also increased ( $b = 0.236, SE = 0.047, p < .001$ ), and in turn, as belief in political signalling increased, the greater the support of censorship ( $b = 0.171, SE = 0.048, p < .001$ ).

**Negative Perception of Protester.** Negative perception of the ALM-supporting protester significantly mediated the relationship between ID with ALM and censorship, and



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partially mediated the relationship between ID with BLM and censorship of the ALM-supporting protester. Negative perception of the BLM-protester partially mediated the relationship between ID with the BLM movement and censorship. There was not significant evidence that negative perception mediated the relationship between ID with the ALM movement and censorship of the BLM-supporting protester. This supported our predictions.

Negative perception of the ALM-supporting protester significantly mediated the relationship between identification with ALM and censorship, as there was a significant indirect path ( $z = -6.818, p < .001$ ), and a non-significant direct path ( $z = 0.244, p = .807$ ). As identification with the ALM movement decreased, negative perception of the ALM-supporting protester increased ( $b = -0.377, SE = 0.029, p < .001$ ), and in turn, the greater the negative perception of the protester, the higher the level of support of censorship ( $b = 0.553, SE = 0.065, p < .001$ ).

However, when examining the mediation effect of negative perception of the ALM-supporting protester, it was found to only partially mediate the relationship between identification with BLM and censorship, as both the indirect and direct paths were significant ( $z = 5.70, p < .001$ ;  $z = 3.18, p = .001$  respectively). As identification with the BLM movement increased, negative perception of the ALM-supporting protester also increased ( $b = 0.236, SE = 0.033, p < .001$ ), and in turn, as negative perception increased, the greater the support of censorship ( $b = 0.472, SE = 0.054, p < .001$ ).

There was not significant evidence that negative perception of the BLM-supporting protester mediated support of censorship and identification with the ALM movement, as the indirect path was not significant ( $z = 2.28, p = .022$ ). However, when examining the mediation effect of negative perception, it only partially mediates the relationship between identification with BLM and censorship of the BLM-supporting protester, as both the indirect

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and direct paths were significant ( $z = -6.41, p < .001$ ;  $z = 2.94, p = .003$  respectively). As identification with the BLM movement increased, negative perception of the BLM-supporting protester decreased ( $b = -0.263, SE = 0.038, p < .001$ ), and in turn, as negative perception increased, the greater the support of censorship ( $b = 0.645, SE = 0.055, p < .001$ ).

**Harmful to Share Views.** Belief that it was harmful for both the ALM and BLM-supporting protesters to share their views significantly mediated the relationship between identification with ALM and censorship. Belief that it could be harmful for both the ALM and BLM-supporting protesters to share their views partially mediated the relationship between ID with the BLM movement and censorship. This partially supported our predictions.

Perception of harm caused by the ALM-supporting protester sharing their view significantly mediated the relationship between identification with ALM and censorship, as there was a significant indirect path ( $z = -7.249, p < .001$ ), and a non-significant direct path ( $z = 0.516, p = .606$ ). As identification with the ALM movement decreased, perception that it is harmful for the ALM protester to share their view increased ( $b = -0.476, SE = 0.035, p < .001$ ), and in turn, the greater the perception that it is harmful for the protester to share their views, the higher the level of support of censorship ( $b = 0.446, SE = 0.050, p < .001$ ).

However, when examining the mediation effect of belief in harm caused by the ALM-supporting protester sharing their view, only partially mediation in the relationship was observed between identification with BLM and censorship, as both the indirect and direct paths were significant ( $z = 5.84, p < .001$ ;  $z = 3.36, p < .001$  respectively). As identification with the BLM movement increased, belief that it is harmful for the ALM-supporting protester to share their view also increased ( $b = 0.293, SE = 0.043, p < .001$ ), and in turn, as belief in harm increased, the greater the support of censorship ( $b = 0.395, SE = 0.036, p < .001$ ).

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Belief that it is harmful for the protester to share their views mediates the relationship between identification with the ALM movement and censorship of the BLM-supporting protester, as there is a significant indirect path ( $z = 4.52, p < .001$ ), and a non-significant direct path ( $z = 1.76, p = .078$ ). As identification with the ALM movement increases, belief that it is harmful for the BLM-supporting protester to share their view increases ( $b = 0.182, SE = 0.041, p < .001$ ), and in turn, the greater the belief that it is harmful for the protester to share their view, the higher the level of support of censorship ( $b = 0.508, SE = 0.045, p < .001$ ).

However, when examining the mediation effect of belief of harm caused by the BLM-supporting protester sharing their view, it only partially mediated the relationship between identification with BLM and censorship, as both the indirect and direct paths are significant ( $z = -6.72, p < .001$ ;  $z = 3.86, p < .001$  respectively). As identification with the BLM movement decreases, belief that it is harmful for the BLM-supporting protester to share their view increased ( $b = -0.313, SE = 0.040, p < .001$ ), and in turn, as belief in potential harm increases, the greater the support of censorship ( $b = 0.605, SE = 0.041, p < .001$ ).

## Discussion

The present study examines factors which affect a person's likelihood of supporting censorship of a protester supporting either the ALM or BLM movement. The overall finding was that people's support for censorship depended on their own political values. Notably, participants who opposed the protester's view were more likely to think that the protester could cause harm by sharing their view, was attempting to signal their political allegiance, had an ulterior motive for their actions (for participants that identified with BLM, but the protester supported ALM), was a dangerous and bad person, and supported censoring them. Moreover, perception of harm, negative perception, belief of political signaling, and belief of an ulterior motive, either fully or partially mediated support of censorship.

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This study also explored people's support for several other consequences for the protester. People were generally unsupportive of each of the seven potential consequences, however, there were differences observed based on statement support. When participants opposed the protester's viewpoint, regardless of whether they were in support of BLM or ALM, increased support was observed for jailing, firing, monitoring their views, beating them up, and publicly shaming the protester, in comparison to supporters of the protester's viewpoint. When participants shared the protester's viewpoint, regardless of whether they were in support of BLM or ALM, decreased support of beating them up and increased support of giving them an award and showing them on the local news was observed. When participants had greater identification with the ALM movement, when they shared views with the protester, they opposed firing the protester or having their views monitored, but if they disagreed with the protesters, they did not support them going on the local news. When participants identified with the BLM movement, they did not support publicly shaming the protester when they shared viewpoints.

## General Discussion

### Interactions between Level of Identification and Measure Support

As observed in Study 1, for people that support the either movement, they were more likely to believe that the statement was equal to a rephrased, non-political statement (H2). This belief may help explain the results that were observed when measuring perception of harm and negative perception of the protester. Regardless of whether a person supports ALM or BLM, if they hold the belief that the cause is hoping to create justice and fairness to whichever group of people, if someone opposes the movement, then that undermines the perception of good that the movement is trying to bring about. Thus, in the wider sense, opposition to the movement could be perceived as a barrier to equality and justice in society.

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This finding challenges the ideas of Jost et al., (2003), who observed that conservatives are particularly motivated (more so than liberals). Jost et al., theorized that the motivational reasoning observed in conservatives is centered around core ideological foundations of conservatism; key factors being resistance to stress and justification of inequality. While Jost and colleagues (2003) finding may be true generally, evidence to support this claim was not seen in our data. Instead, it was found that both liberals and conservatives were motivated to censor their opponents' views. Indeed, there was some evidence that BLM supporters were more censorious than ALM supporters were.

The support of perception of the political statement acting as a political signal (H3), was somewhat replicated in Study 2, when participants were asked whether they thought the protester was sharing their view to signal their political allegiance. Similarly to Study 1, participants that shared the same view as the protester did not believe that the protester was attempting to signal their political allegiance. Whereas participants that did not share their viewpoint with the protester were significantly more likely to believe that they were more attempting to signal their political allegiance. This further supports the hypothesis that partisanship is a significant factor surrounding the two movements, and that the statements act as dog-whistles. As previously mentioned, dog-whistle statements are only seen as political signals when viewed from an opposing viewpoint, as people are less likely to believe that a statement, they support has negative connotations surrounding it (Hanley-López, 2015).

When a protester had a similar viewpoint to the protester, they believed that the protester was more likely to have a genuine reason for protesting. Regardless of which movement the participant was identified with. The belief that a like-minded protester is acting with genuine reasoning may be in part explained by confirmation bias (Nickerson, 1998). If a person has high identification to a cause, when they encounter a person who is publicly sharing their shared viewpoint, the confirmation bias affirms that the protester is protesting

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for similar genuine reasons as one individually holds to explain their own identification to the cause. The finding that people are more likely to believe a person or protester that has opposing views to oneself is giving a political signal by sharing their viewpoint adds to the current literature of dog-whistle politics. It expands the current literature (e.g., Haney-López, 2015; Wetts & Willer), from looking specifically at statements used in politics, to wider socio-political movements.

It is important to note that for each condition, level of identification with the movement directly related to level of support of censorship towards the protester. Thus, indicating that no matter where someone stands on the spectrum on support for ALM or BLM, when you encounter a person with opposing views to yourself, you are more likely to support censorship. It was extremely surprising to observe that participants who identified with BLM reported the highest response of censorship against the ALM-supporting protester (see Table 7), albeit, when interpreting the mean response, it was still only somewhat disagreeing to censor the ALM protester. Although, as previously noted, the result that participants who had high identity with BLM were more likely to support censorship of the ALM protester, and less likely to support a BLM supporting protester, may be related to why the movement started in the first place. The acts that were occurring against black Americans, primarily by white Americans in positions of authority (Lebron, 2017), posed a threat to overall safety and wellbeing of people of color across the U.S.A. Thus, when a protester is supporting a cause that is perceived to be championing for against the BLM movement, it may elicit stronger reactions in comparison to an ALM supporter seeing a BLM protester.

## Support of Possible Consequences for Protesting

When examining support towards possible consequences that the protester could face for sharing their views, the results were not quite so conclusive. While there were significant differences observed across all seven of the proposed possible consequences, for at least two

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of the four conditions, when examining the average stated level of support for the consequences, participants across the sample disagreed with all consequences. Thus, the results did not add support to the claim that people would be more willing to censor when they disagree with the protester (H4).

This result that few people were supportive of any of the possible direct consequences, was quite surprising but may possibly be related to the scenario that was posed to participants. The scenario was purposely written to reflect a situation in which a protester was clearly demonstrating their viewpoint to get attention for their cause, but not an extreme or disruptive manner. When examining perception of extreme protesters, Feinberg et al., (2020) found that overall perception of the movement that the protesters were acting in the name of, decreased with extreme acts, while Giersch (2019) reported that support of punishing campus protesters was reported by both conservatives and liberal students. Neither studies examined support of specific consequences to the protesters. By including questions which specifically asked about potential consequences for the protester, this helps to fill a gap in the current literature, as there is little research which includes this specific component. To examine if there is a difference in support of possible consequences, the in another condition could be added where the protester was causing a more extreme protest (such as blocking a highway, as was used in the Feinberg et al., (2019) study). In both scenarios the cause that is being protested could be constant to examine if severity of protest moderated the relationship between support of cause and support of consequence.

However, it should be noted that the measure of censorship is also a potential consequence in its own standing, and support of censorship was observed across the four conditions. It is interesting that people appear supportive of the concept of censorship, but when given the choice of specific actions, support diminishes. This may be related to psychological distancing (Fisher & Manstead, 2016). When asked about general support of

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censorship, participants may be able to respond, with the frame of mind that they are not directly performing the act, so they can distance themselves from any possible outcome. However, when directly asked about specific potential consequences, the distance is reduced, and participants become unwilling to support the specific acts.

### Theoretical Model to Predict Censorship

The initial analysis was concerned with examining how each measure or consequence acted individually within each condition. To examine whether belief that it was harmful for the protester to share their views, negative perception, belief of an ulterior motive, and belief of political signaling were significant predictors of censorship, a linear regression was applied. The perception that it is harmful for the protester to share their view was significant in all models, as was negative perception of the protester (except for the condition with an ALM protester and identification with BLM). Ulterior motive was a significant predictor of censorship for the condition with a BLM protester and participants gave level of identification to ALM, but for no other model. And political signal was not significant in any of the models. These results give partial support to the hypothesis that willingness to support censorship will increase when they perceive the protester negatively, when they think they might be harmful, if they have an ulterior motive, and when they think they are giving a political signal (H4).

It was interesting to find that despite significant findings in both Study 1 and when examining the individual measures of in Study 2, belief that the protester is attempting to signal their political allegiance was not a significant predictor of censorship. As previously noted, as the two movements are highly partisan, people may be able to assume one's political standing based on which statement is supported. However, the fact that there is a high perception of political signal associated with sharing one's viewpoint, as seen in this analysis, this does not necessarily mean that people believe it is a strong enough reason to



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alter support of censorship. People may be able to make a reasonable assumption of their political standing based on their viewpoint, but this is not enough to censor- just giving a signal does not necessarily present a risk. The addition of perception of harm, negative perception, and an ulterior motive are more significant factors. The direct influence of political signaling on censorship is examined further in the analysis through a mediation study.

Similarly, it was surprising that perception of an ulterior motive was only a significant predictor of censorship in one condition. Similar to the non-significant influence of political signaling, perception of an ulterior motive, alone, may not indicate possible risk. As observed when analyzing the individual measures, the perception of an ulterior motive significantly increased when participants who identified with the BLM movement saw an ALM-supporting protester and decreased when participants saw a protester who had a similar viewpoint to themselves. However, when considering whether to censor the protester, people may need additional information (i.e. does the perceived ulterior motive increase the risk that I may be exposed to?) for perception of an ulterior motive to be serious enough threat to censor. In instances of short interaction, people exhibit the truth bias, which is bias to judge statements as truthful, until given information to the contrary (Masip et al., 2009). If there is no supporting information to strengthen suspicion of the perceived ulterior motive, then people are likely to trust the protester at face value.

### Mediating Influences on Censorship

When people shared viewpoints with the protester, the perception of an ulterior motive fully mediated the relationship between identification and support of censorship. Thus, indicating that when people have no reason to believe the protester has an ulterior motive, there would be no support of censorship. However, when people who identify with the BLM movement saw the ALM-supporting protester this relationship was only partially

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mediated, thus indicating that the relationship between identification and censorship would still be present regardless of the belief of an ulterior motive. This supports the hypothesis that people will more willing to support censorship when they think the protester has an ulterior motive (H5). The full mediation observed may be explained by in-group biases (Mullen et al., 1992). People tend to view in-group members more favorably, thus, unless extra information is given to arise suspicion of an ulterior motive, the in-group bias would reduce the likelihood perception of harm to be made present.

For people that highly identify with the ALM movement, perception of harm fully mediated the relationship between identification and support of censorship. This was regardless of whether they shared views with the protester or not. For people that highly identify with the BLM movement, perception of harm partially mediated the relationship between identification and support of censorship, regardless of whether they shared views with the protester. Thus, indicating that the relationship between identification and censorship would still be present regardless of perception of harm. Thus, supporting the hypothesis that people are more supportive of censorship when they perceive the protester to be harmful (H5).

For people who identified with the BLM movement, negative perception of the protester partially mediated the relationship between identification and support of censorship thus indicating that the relationship between identification and censorship would still be present regardless of the belief of negative perception, thus supporting the initial hypotheses (H5). However, when people who identify with the ALM movement saw an ALM-supporting protester this relationship was fully mediated, Thus, indicating that when people positively perceive the protester, there would be no support of censorship.

A 2016 Pew Research Centre study reported that people held extremely negative perceptions toward members of the opposing party, in both Republicans and Democrats. The

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study reported that it was the first time since the beginning of their surveying that both parties expressed very unfavorable views towards one another. Approximately half of Republican and Democrats reported that the opposing party made them feel “afraid”, and this was even more heightened in highly partisan respondents (Pew Research Centre, 2016). This finding may influence the observed result that perception of harm and negative perception of the protester mediated the relationship between level of identification with the ALM or BLM movements and censorship.

When people see an ALM-supporting protester, belief that the protester is attempting to give a political signal partially mediates the relationship between identification to either movement and support of censorship. However, there was no mediation of political signaling when there was a BLM-supporting protester. Thus, giving partial support to the hypothesis that people will be more willing to support censorship when they perceive the protester as giving a political signal (H5). It is interesting that there was not a strong mediation effect observed with this measure. This may be related to the public perception of why the two movements exist. As the BLM movement has gained a lot of traction and awareness within the general public sphere, people may be more certain that they know why the movement exists (Horowitz & Livingston, 2016), whereas for the ALM movement, people may need to make their own assumptions, thus political associations may be formed.

The partial and full mediation that was observed may be related to the Justification-Suppression Model. The Justification-Suppression Model (Crandall & Eshleman, 2003) aims to explain the processes that lead to the expression and actions of a person’s individual prejudice. Typically, a person can suppress their prejudices, until some form of justification is present, which enables a person to display their underlying prejudices in an explainable, and possibly socially acceptable way. For many people, for people that are high in identification towards ALM or BLM, the instance in which they observe a protester who is publicly sharing

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a viewpoint that opposes their view, the act of censorship becomes psychologically justifiable. This may mean that while in any other circumstances a person may be more than content with ignoring a protester, if they are not attacking an identifying factor. However, the mediation of perception of harm, negative perception of the protester, belief that they have an ulterior motive and are attempting to signal their political allegiance acts as justification to censor the protester.

### Practical and Theoretical Implications

The concept of censorship is not a new phenomenon. It would be foolish to imagine that any increased insight gained from this study will resolve the issue of censorship, but it may add another layer of understanding to the struggle against it. Furthermore, there are many more areas of censorship than the area of individual censorship of another person that is explored in the current study, but by increasing awareness of what an individual can be aware of in their own actions and thoughts may provide a small step closer to change on a greater scale.

Due to the strength of support and reaction that the movements have gotten on social media, research examining various facets of the Black Lives Matter and All Lives Matter movements have been gaining traction over the past years, since the formation of the movements. A range of areas have been the focus of research such as the role of color-blindness (e.g., Atkins, 2019), the formation of the movements (e.g., Rickford, 2016), singling out how they differ in online discussion (e.g., Gallagher et al., 2018), to how the movements are viewed (e.g., Horowitz & Livingston, 2016). Despite this growing interest, the area of censorship towards these movement has been largely untouched, despite specific instances of censorship occurring (e.g., “School’s censorship of Black Lives Matter posters violate free speech, ACLU says”, 2019). This current study starts the attempt of filling the gap the current BLM and ALM literature of censorship.

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When examining the process of suspicion of an ulterior motive Marchand and Vonk (2005) found that upon receiving information, people readily suspect the presence of an ulterior motive. In Marchand and Vonk's experiment, participants were presented with a cue that varied in degree of information about the hypothetical scenario. When participants were given more negative information on behavior, suspicion of an ulterior motive increased. Similar findings were also reported in an earlier study, which reported that people were quicker to suspect an ulterior motive of a negative action, than of positive actions (Vonk & Van Knippenberg, 1994). The present study adds to this literature, by removing given cues. Perception of an ulterior motive was generated based on existing perceptions and stereotypes of BLM or ALM protesters. The scenario was specifically written to avoid providing participants with any particularly negative or positive information, to avoid any priming effects of attitude. This work is particularly relevant to connect with normative and non-normative collective action work (e.g., Tausch et al., 2011), as it elaborates on how people may perceive protesters. In relation to Marchand and Vonk (2005) and Vonk and Van Knippenberg (1994) studies, if the protester provides any further information which may shed them in a negative light, people may be more likely to believe that they have an ulterior motive for the action, and would be exacerbated if the protester already was perceived negatively.

The present study adds to the current literature on attitudes of censorship towards others and adds a specific focus using ALM and BLM movements. It was observed that while we were able to generate a model which included factors which significantly predicted support of censorship, overall, people were not supportive of the potential censoring consequences that were posed as possible reactions to the ALM or BLM-supporting protester. This result varied from what was predicted, as it was thought that participants that disagreed with the protester would at least support censorship to some degree. However, there were still

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significant differences between the conditions, and identification did significantly predict support of censorship in both movements.

### Limitations

When examining factors that make statements more believable and trustworthy for readers, Rho (2019) notes that it is possible that the inclusion of the hashtag to a statement makes the statement more partisan. This could be a possible extension for Study 1. Due to the magnitude of the discussion that occurs online, this could be an interesting avenue to explore. If an extra condition was included, which had the political statements written out with a hashtag (e.g. #BlackLivesMatter or #BLM), it would be interesting to see if there was a difference in support between the hashtag and non-hashtag statement. By including a hashtag condition, it may possibly strengthen support of the three hypotheses that were tested, due to possibly making partisanship a more salient factor to center-left and far-right participants (Faris et al., 2017).

The difference between concrete and abstract scenarios may pose a significant change to the observed results of the present study. As seen in a UK study which examined university student's support of free speech (Simpson & Kaufmann, 2019), participants indicated that they supported free speech in hypothetical scenarios, but when given examples of real world instances where either a speaker was denied or given the chance to discuss a relatively controversial topic, they were less supportive of free speech, in the examples where the speaker was denied the chance to speak. It is possible that the participants in this study were rationalising the outcome of whether the speakers were denied or accepted to give their speech base. For example, when the participants had to decide whether to support the actions of the universities, they may have excused the university if they think the university would only have acted in such a way, if they had sound moral reasoning for doing so. This would be an interesting factor to consider in the present study as it may exacerbate the results. As some

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agreement was observed towards the opposing protester, in a concrete situation, support for censorship may possibly increase, following the Simpson and Kaufmann (2019) results.

A possible extension to the study to address this limitation would be to attempt to replicate the hypothetical scenario posed in Study 2, in a concrete real-life scenario. It is one thing for someone to say that they support a certain act or view when they are safely sitting behind their computer screen and answering a multichoice survey, that really, will not affect themselves from the moment they complete the survey. And their responses do not have a direct effect on another person. However, if an actor was able to pose as a protester and the participants were able to actively engage with the protester or be able to influence some sort of action against them it would be interesting to see if the current results would replicate.

As this study only uses participants from the U.S.A., the results and conclusions formed from this study may not be generalisable to other populations. Further studies would have to be conducted to be able to say conclusively whether the trends observed in the present study relate in other settings. Partisanship is a salient factor in many different cultures, so while the direct example of ALM and BLM may not be relevant, given there is a similar dog-whistle statement in use in a political sphere, it would be expected that the results would replicate. None of the questions posed, aside from the specific use of ALM and BLM, were written with the intention to be specific to Americans, thus they may be acceptable to use directly.

A further limitation of the present study, is that the possible censoring consequences that were posed to participants, may not mimic the extent of censorship that people perceive to be happening, if at all, around them. It may have been beneficial to run a pre-test to examine which acts of censorship people believe occur already, and which they believe may be appropriate for a given scenario. Furthermore, while the study was interested in identifying factors that predicted an individual's support of censorship, and various

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consequences, it could be interesting to examine whether people differ in support if they are posed as being the person responsible for the action of censoring, versus altering an outside body, such as the FBI to the protesters actions, which resulted in censorship. This would have to be posed as a hypothetical scenario, as there would be some ethical concerns, like those raised after the infamous Milgram Experiment (Milgram, 1963).

## Future Directions

One possible future extension of the current study could be to artificially create an environment in which censoring may occur. For example, two groups of participants could be randomly created in a lab and posed to have opposing views to one another. Participants on whichever side of the argument they hold. Initially the participants will be able to mingle and get to know the members of their group, promoting an in-group mentality, and are able to promote their stance on a certain topic. Then participants could be told to engage in a debate or discussion where they are able to share and discuss their views on the particular topic which differentiates them. After the debate, participants would be presented with a similar questionnaire as was given in Study 1 and 2 of the present study but rephrased to reflect the real situation they have been placed in in the lab. It would be interesting to see if the interaction between the two groups would elicit increased censoring support towards the opposing group. Furthermore, Hanley-López (2017) reflects, that the only way to reduce the biases that are drawn from the interpretation of a dog-whistle statement is to self-reflect on the statement, and the associations that were drawn from it. Thus, in a debate setting it would allow participants to reflect on their initial assumptions made towards the out-group, and possibly reach alternate conclusions if given the chance.

Another possible extension to the study, would be to replicate the current studies with a couple of different other social movements, for example, climate change activists against climate change deniers. Both sides still elicit a partisan reaction – Republicans erring on the



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side of denial, while activists are typically on the Democratic side. This would enable to external validity of the study to be scrutinized. If the trends that are observed in the current study are held constant across different contexts, this could enable more public awareness of what thoughts and actions may precipitate censorship towards others. Awareness may enable people to react and assess their thoughts and behaviors before outwardly acting, if they want to reduce the chance of censoring someone unintentionally.

An interesting addition the present model may have been to include degree of moral conviction people feel surrounding BLM and ALM, as this may have been a possible influential factor behind the observed support of censorship. Degree of moral conviction was defined as “a strong and absolute stances on moral issues (e.g., Skitka, Bauman, & Sargis, 2005; Tetlock, 2002; Turiel, 1983), as important energisers of collective action” (Van Zomwewn, 2012, p. 52). Van Zomeren et al., (2012) reported that the degree of moral conviction significantly predicted collective action and the intention to act. Furthermore, political identification was identified as a possible factor in Van Zomeren and colleague’s model of collective action, which may connect the observed results of support of censorship and the support of H1.

To extend the present study’s findings surrounding factors that influence censorship of others, a further study is intended to be conducted which examines factors which may affect self-censorship when discussing ALM or BLM. Participants will first indicate their support or opposition to Black lives matter (BLM) and All lives matter (ALM). We are testing how people react in their everyday lives when they are put in the situation of sharing their own attitudes towards ALM or BLM. Specifically, what factors contribute to a person censoring their own speech. It would be hypothesized that people who believe they will be viewed negatively if they share their viewpoint will have greater levels of self-censorship. Furthermore, people who think their views will be perceived as stemming from an ulterior

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motive will self-censor more. People who think their friends will take negative actions against them if they speak will self-censor more. People who think their friends will view their viewpoint as harmful will self-censor more. People who think their friends will view them as giving a political signal will self-censor more. People who think their friends will try to censor them for sharing their view will self-censor more. Furthermore, levels of self-censorship will also be predicted by perceived level of support in the American public (e.g., if there is perceived high levels of support for BLM in the American public, and the participant does support BLM, there will be low levels of self-censorship).

### Conclusion

This research attempted to explore some of psychological biases and salient factors that affect censorship behavior towards a protester who supported either the All Lives Matter or Black Lives Matter movements. It was observed that support of ALM and BLM was highly partisan, that when people support either statement they are more likely to believe that the political statement is equivalent to a rephrased, non-politicised version of the statement, and that by sharing their view on the statement they are not attempting to signal their political allegiance. On average, participants who disagreed with the political statement and did not identify with the movement were more likely to indicate that they would be in support of censorship towards a protester who agreed with the movement and statement, in comparison to participants that agreed with the protesters statement and movement. There was partial support to suggest that participants were more supportive of censorship when they believed the protester had an ulterior motive, when they thought the statement was a political signal, when they had negative perceptions of the protester, and when they thought sharing the view would be harmful. However, there was not significant support of potential consequences for the protester. Overall, the present study adds to the growing literature, providing insight into factors which influence support of censoring others and how identification towards a social

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cause effects perception of non-extreme protesters. Awareness of what factors accentuate censorship and perception of others may enable growth on a personal level and improved social perception of collectivist groups.

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## **Appendix A: Study 1 Questionnaire**

### **Attitudes Towards Political Statements**

#### **Study 1 Information Sheet**

My name is Kate Fox and I am a Masters student in the Department of Psychology at the University of Canterbury. You are invited to take part the research project “Attitudes Towards Political Statements”. Thank-you very much for choosing to complete this questionnaire today.

The aim of this study is to investigate how individuals react to certain political statements. In today’s session, we will progress through a series of questions that look at this. The first section of the questionnaire will ask you to answer some general demographic questions. Once you have completed this initial section, you will move onto the main section of the study. You will be required to consider your views towards certain statements, and answer some short questions about your personal views in regards to these statements. If you choose to continue onto to the questionnaire, please take your time in completing your responses, and answer as truthfully as you can.

Tasks will be completed on the online site Amazon Mechanical Turk. Questions will be completed on a computer, in which case you’ll respond pressing a button, or typing your response. I will record your responses so we can add them to responses given by others and analyse them.

For taking part in the project, you will receive \$0.25, through the Amazon Mechanical Turk payment system . The study will take between 2-3 minutes to complete. If you want to stop at any time for a break during the questionnaire you are more than welcome to do so. You may choose to withdraw from questionnaire at any stage by exiting the browser. Please note however, that after this session has finished, information cannot be withdrawn from the project as it will be deidentified when it is entered into the computer.

The results of this study may be published, but you can be assured of the complete confidentiality of data gathered. To ensure confidentiality no names will be used on the questionnaires or in the final report. Only Andrew Vonasch and Kate Fox will have access to the data, which will be securely stored electronically by password protection. After the conclusion of the experiment Andrew Vonasch will keep a copy of the data for five years, after which it will be destroyed. A thesis is a public document and will be available through the UC Library.

This project is being carried out as a requirement for a Master’s Thesis by Kate Fox under the supervision of Dr. Andrew Vonasch, who can be contacted at the email addresses below. Kate or Andrew will be happy to address any concerns you have about participation in the project.

Contact details as follows: Kate Fox [kate.fox@pg.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:kate.fox@pg.canterbury.ac.nz) Dr. Andrew Vonasch  
Phone: +6433690726 [andrew.vonasch@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:andrew.vonasch@canterbury.ac.nz)

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, and participants should address any complaints to The Chair, Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-

ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)

Human Ethics Committee: Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz

### **Attitudes Towards Political Statements**

#### **Study 1 Consent Form**

This research examines how people react to political statements, and is being conducted by University of Canterbury Masters' student Kate Fox under supervision of Dr. Andrew Vonasch. All responses are being collected through the online survey site Amazon Mechanical Turk. By signing this consent form you are agreeing to participate in a study about your opinions and views in regards to certain political statements. Your involvement is to fill out the following survey. This will take you a maximum of three minutes. The data you provide is collected anonymously so the researchers will not know your identity. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time by closing the browser. As the questions are of a moral nature you may have emotional reactions to some of them. If you feel you are unable to continue you can stop the survey by closing the browser. The data will be stored securely and used as part of a Master of Arts thesis at the University of Canterbury, and may also be published in international peer-reviewed journals. I understand what is required of me if I agree to take part in the research. I understand that participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without penalty. As all data collected has no identifying information, removal of any information which has already been entered into the system is impossible. I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential to the research team and any indirectly identifiable information will be deleted during data collection. Any published or reported results will not identify the participants.

I understand that a thesis is a public document and will be available through the University of Canterbury library. I understand that all data collected for the study will be kept in locked and secure facilities and/or in password protected electronic form. Confidential, de-identified data will be stored indefinitely on Open Science Framework to ensure other researchers can independently replicate and verify that conclusions from the study if they wish. I understand the risks associated with taking part and how they will be managed. I understand that I can contact the researcher Kate Fox at kate.fox@pg.canterbury.ac.nz or supervisor Andrew Vonasch at andrew.vonasch@canterbury.ac.nz for further information. If I have any complaints, I can contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz) By clicking the button below, I agree to participate in this research project.

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (this will take you to the end of the survey) (2)

## Attitudes Towards Censorship

☐

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements, and explain your reasoning.

**Start of Block: Control First**

Do you support the phrase "Asian Lives Matter"?

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)

In the box below please explain the reasoning for your response:

---

Do you think that Asian people should receive fair treatment and justice under the law?

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)

In your opinion does "Asian Lives Matter", mean the same as "Asian people should receive fair treatment and justice under the law"?

☐ Strongly Disagree (1)

☐ Disagree (2)

☐ Somewhat Disagree (3)

☐ Somewhat Agree (4)

☐ Agree (5)

☐ Strongly Agree (6)

### Attitudes Towards Censorship

In your opinion, do people mainly say "Asian Lives Matter" to signal their political allegiance?

- ☐ Strongly Disagree (1)
- ☐ Disagree (2)
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree (3)
- ☐ Somewhat Agree (4)
- ☐ Agree (5)
- ☐ Strongly Agree (6)

**End of Block: Control First**

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**Start of Block: Control Rephrased First**

Do you think that Asian people should receive fair treatment and justice under the law?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Do you support the phrase "Asian Lives Matter"?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

In the box below please explain the reasoning for your response:

---

### Attitudes Towards Censorship

In your opinion does "Asian Lives Matter", mean the same as "Asian people should receive fair treatment and justice under the law"?

- ☐ Strongly Disagree (1)
- ☐ Disagree (2)
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree (3)
- ☐ Somewhat Agree (4)
- ☐ Agree (5)
- ☐ Strongly Agree (6)

In your opinion, do people mainly say "Asian Lives Matter" to signal their political allegiance?

- ☐ Strongly Disagree (1)
- ☐ Disagree (2)
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree (3)
- ☐ Somewhat Agree (4)
- ☐ Agree (5)
- ☐ Strongly Agree (6)

**End of Block: Control Rephrased First**

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**Start of Block: BLM Rephrased First**

### Attitudes Towards Censorship

Do you think that black people should receive fair treatment and justice under the law, alongside all people?

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)

Do you support the phrase "Black Lives Matter"?

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)

In the box below please explain the reasoning for your response:

---

In your opinion does "Black Lives Matter", mean the same as "black people should receive fair treatment and justice under the law"?

☐ Strongly Disagree (1)

☐ Disagree (2)

☐ Somewhat Disagree (3)

☐ Somewhat Agree (4)

☐ Agree (5)

☐ Strongly Agree (6)



### Attitudes Towards Censorship

In your opinion, do people mainly say "Black Lives Matter" to signal their political allegiance?

- ☐ Strongly Disagree (1)
- ☐ Disagree (2)
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree (3)
- ☐ Somewhat Agree (4)
- ☐ Agree (5)
- ☐ Strongly Agree (6)

**End of Block: BLM Rephrased First**

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**Start of Block: BLM First**

Do you support the phrase "Black Lives Matter"?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

In the box below please explain the reasoning for your response:

---

Do you think that black people should receive fair treatment and justice under the law, alongside all people?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

### Attitudes Towards Censorship

In your opinion does "Black Lives Matter", mean the same as "black people should receive fair treatment and justice under the law"?

- ☐ Strongly Disagree (1)
- ☐ Disagree (2)
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree (3)
- ☐ Somewhat Agree (4)
- ☐ Agree (5)
- ☐ Strongly Agree (6)

In your opinion, do people mainly say "Black Lives Matter" to signal their political allegiance?

- ☐ Strongly Disagree (1)
- ☐ Disagree (2)
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree (3)
- ☐ Somewhat Agree (4)
- ☐ Agree (5)
- ☐ Strongly Agree (6)

**End of Block: BLM First**

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**Start of Block: ALM First**

Do you support the phrase "All Lives Matter"?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

## Attitudes Towards Censorship

In the box below please explain the reasoning for your response:

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Do you think that everybody should receive fair treatment and justice under the law?

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)

In your opinion does "All Lives Matter", mean the same as "everybody should receive fair treatment and justice under the law"?

☐ Strongly Disagree (1)

☐ Disagree (2)

☐ Somewhat Disagree (3)

☐ Somewhat Agree (4)

☐ Agree (5)

☐ Strongly Agree (6)

In your opinion, do people mainly say "All Lives Matter" to signal their political allegiance?

☐ Strongly Disagree (1)

☐ Disagree (2)

☐ Somewhat Disagree (3)

☐ Somewhat Agree (4)

☐ Agree (5)

☐ Strongly Agree (6)

**End of Block: ALM First**

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**Start of Block: ALM Rephrased First**

## Attitudes Towards Censorship

Do you think that everybody should receive fair treatment and justice under the law?

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)

Do you support the phrase "All Lives Matter"?

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)

In the box below please explain the reasoning for your response:

---

In your opinion does "All Lives Matter", mean the same as "everybody should receive fair treatment and justice under the law"?

☐ Strongly Disagree (1)

☐ Disagree (2)

☐ Somewhat Disagree (3)

☐ Somewhat Agree (4)

☐ Agree (5)

☐ Strongly Agree (6)

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## Attitudes Towards Censorship

In your opinion, do people mainly say "All Lives Matter" to signal their political allegiance?

- ☐ Strongly Disagree (1)
- ☐ Disagree (2)
- ☐ Somewhat Disagree (3)
- ☐ Somewhat Agree (4)
- ☐ Agree (5)
- ☐ Strongly Agree (6)

**End of Block: ALM Rephrased First**

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**Start of Block: Demographics**

Age (in years):

▼ 18 (1) ... 60+ (44)

What gender do you identify with?

- ☐ Male (1)
- ☐ Female (2)
- ☐ Other (3) \_\_\_\_\_

What ethnic groups do you identify with?

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☐ Black (1)

☐ White (2)

☐ American Indian, Alaska Native, or Native American (3)

☐ Asian or Pacific Island (4)

☐ Hispanic (5)

☐ Other (6) \_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]

## Attitudes Towards Censorship

Please select your preferred political party:

- ☐ Democratic Party (1)
- ☐ Republican Party (2)
- ☐ Libertarian Party (3)
- ☐ Green Party (4)

End of Block: Demographics

---

Start of Block: Debrief

### Attitudes Towards Political Statements Study 1 Debriefing Form for participants

This study was interested in how people respond to various political statements, and some of the processes behind individual's reasoning for their responses. In order to understand this further we asked for information about your viewpoint to three statements and/or questions, your reasoning for your response. Furthermore, you answered a range of demographic questions.

Three politicized statements were used during the study, as well as three questions which intended to act as synonyms for the statements, that is, we rephrased the statements to avoid any political association while still retaining the core meaning behind the statements. You were randomly assigned to see two of the possible six options. The three political statements were "All Lives Matter", "Black Lives Matter", and "Asian Lives Matter". The three non-politicized questions were "Do you think that everybody should receive fair treatment and justice under the law?", "Do you think that black people should receive fair treatment and justice under the law?", and "Do you think that Asian people should receive fair treatment and justice under the law?". We used a mixture of known political statements and non-politicized questions to examine if there is a difference in response due to the political association attached to the statements. Furthermore, the "Asian Lives Matter" and the corresponding non-politicized question were included as a control condition.

Now that the full nature of the study has been discussed, if you no longer wish to contribute your information, you may withdraw from the study if you wish by exiting the browser. Furthermore, as the full nature of the study has been discussed, you may not return to the questionnaire to adjust your responses in anyway. There will be no negative penalty to you if you withdraw, however, in accordance to Amazon Mechanical Turk procedure, payment will not be given if you exit the questionnaire. Please note however, that after this session has finished, information cannot be withdrawn from the project as it will be deidentified when it is entered into the computer. You are welcome to discuss this study further by contact myself or Andrew Vonasch, via the contact details provided below. If you

### Attitudes Towards Censorship

feel the need to talk to anyone further about the effect this study has had on you, outside support can be gained from Mental Healthline in the form of an anonymous and confidential telephone counselling service (1-888-457-8965), or you are welcome to speak with your medical practitioners. Contact details for the researchers are as follows: Kate Fox

kate.fox@pg.canterbury.ac.nz Dr. Andrew Vonasch

andrew.voansch@canterbury.ac.nz Thank you again for participating in this study.

Kind regards,

Kate Fox (Masters Student, University of Canterbury), Dr. Andrew Vonasch (University of Canterbury).



## Appendix B: Study 2 Questionnaire

### Attitudes Towards Political Statements

#### Information Sheet

My name is Kate Fox and I am a Masters student in the Department of Psychology at the University of Canterbury. You are invited to take part the research project “Attitudes Towards Political Statements”. Thank-you very much for choosing to complete this questionnaire today.

The aim of this study is to investigate how individuals react to certain political statements. In today’s session, we will progress through a series of questions that look at this. You will be required to consider your views towards certain statements, and answer some short questions about your personal views in regards to these statements. Furthermore, you will also be asked to share your thoughts and feelings that you may have towards a hypothetical person who shares their own personal view. The last section of the questionnaire will ask you to answer some general demographic questions. If you choose to continue onto to the questionnaire, please take your time in completing your responses, and answer as truthfully as you can.

Tasks will be completed on the online site Amazon Mechanical Turk. Questions will be completed on a computer, in which case you’ll respond pressing a button, or typing your response. I will record your responses so we can add them to responses given by others and analyse them.

For taking part in the project, you will receive \$0.50, through the Amazon Mechanical Turk payment system . The study will take between 4-5 minutes to complete. If you want to stop at any time for a break during the questionnaire you are more than welcome to do so. You may choose to withdraw from questionnaire at any stage by exiting the internet browser. Please note however, that after this session has finished, information cannot be withdrawn from the project as it will be deidentified when it is entered into the computer.

The results of this study may be published, but you can be assured of the complete confidentiality of data gathered. To ensure confidentiality no names will be used on the questionnaires or in the final report. Only Andrew Vonasch and Kate Fox will have access to the data, which will be securely stored electronically by password protection. After the conclusion of the experiment Andrew Vonasch will keep a copy of the data for five years, after which it will be destroyed. A thesis is a public document and will be available through the UC Library.

This project is being carried out as a requirement for a Masters Thesis by Kate Fox under the supervision of Dr. Andrew Vonasch, who can be contacted at the email addresses below. Kate or Andrew will be happy to address any concerns you have about participation in the project. Contact details as follows: Kate Fox [kate.fox@pg.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:kate.fox@pg.canterbury.ac.nz) Andrew Vonasch Phone: +6433690726 [andrew.vonasch@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:andrew.vonasch@canterbury.ac.nz) This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, and

## Attitudes Towards Censorship

participants should address any complaints to The Chair, Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz) Human Ethics Committee: Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz

## Attitudes Towards Political Statements

### Consent Form

This research examines how people react to political statements, and is being conducted by University of Canterbury Masters' student Kate Fox under supervision of Dr. Andrew Vonasch. All responses are being collected through the online survey site Amazon Mechanical Turk. By signing this consent form you are agreeing to participate in a study about your opinions and views in regards to certain political statements. Your involvement is to fill out the following survey. This will take you a maximum of five minutes.

The data you provide is collected anonymously so the researchers will not know your identity. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time by closing the browser. As the questions are of a moral nature you may have emotional reactions to some of them. If you feel you are unable to continue you can stop the survey by closing the browser. The data will be stored securely and used as part of a Master of Arts thesis at the University of Canterbury, and may also be published in international peer-reviewed journals.

I understand what is required of me if I agree to take part in the research. I understand that participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without penalty. As all data collected has no identifying information, removal of any information which has already been entered into the system is impossible.

I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential to the research team and any indirectly identifiable information will be deleted during data collection. Any published or reported results will not identify the participants.

I understand that a thesis is a public document and will be available through the University of Canterbury library. I understand that all data collected for the study will be kept in locked and secure facilities and/or in password protected electronic form. Confidential, de-identified data will be stored indefinitely on Open Science Framework to ensure other researchers can independently replicate and verify that conclusions from the study if they wish.

I understand the risks associated with taking part and how they will be managed. I understand that I can contact the researcher Kate Fox at kate.fox@pg.canterbury.ac.nz or supervisor Andrew Vonasch at andrew.vonasch@canterbury.ac.nz for further information.

If I have any complaints, I can contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz) By clicking the button below, I agree to participate in this research project.

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (this will take you to the end of the questionnaire) (2)

**End of Block: Introduction**

## Attitudes Towards Censorship

**Start of Block: Starting Survey Blurb**

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements, and explain your reasoning.

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**Start of Block: ALM**

I identify with the movement "All Lives Matter"

- ☐ Fully disagree (1)
- ☐ Disagree (2)
- ☐ Somewhat disagree (3)
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- ☐ Somewhat agree (5)
- ☐ Agree (6)
- ☐ Fully agree (7)

I agree with the idea that all lives matter

- ☐ Fully disagree (1)
- ☐ Disagree (2)
- ☐ Somewhat disagree (3)
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- ☐ Somewhat agree (5)
- ☐ Agree (6)
- ☐ Fully agree (7)

In the box below please explain the reasoning for your response:

---

## Attitudes Towards Censorship

**End of Block: ALM**

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**Start of Block: BLM**

I identify with the movement "Black Lives Matter"

- ☐ Fully Disagree (1)
- ☐ Disagree (2)
- ☐ Somewhat disagree (3)
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- ☐ Somewhat agree (5)
- ☐ Agree (6)
- ☐ Fully Agree (7)

I agree with the idea that black lives matter

- ☐ Fully disagree (1)
- ☐ Disagree (2)
- ☐ Somewhat disagree (3)
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (4)
- ☐ Somewhat agree (5)
- ☐ Agree (6)
- ☐ Fully agree (7)

In the box below please explain the reasoning for your response:

---

**End of Block: BLM**

---

**Start of Block: Intro**

## Attitudes Towards Censorship

Thank-you. In the next section of this survey you will be presented with a hypothetical scenario. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement to the various statements which relate back to the scenario.

**End of Block: Intro**

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**Start of Block: BLM - Scenario**

## Attitudes Towards Censorship

You are out in a public space and see someone wearing a t-shirt with the slogan "I support #BlackLivesMatter" and using a megaphone to broadcast their support for **Black Lives Matter** to the public. Do you believe that:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Somewhat Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
They really want to protect the lives of black people (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
They truly think the lives of black people are important (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
They don't care about black people (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
They have an ulterior motive (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In your opinion, do people mainly say "Black lives matter" to signal their political allegiance? (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

When you see this person out sharing their **support** for "**Black Lives Matter**" do you think that:

[illegible]

[illegible]



[illegible]

## Start of Block: ALM - Scenario

Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Somewhat Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)
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They really want to protect the lives of all people (1)						
They truly think the lives of all people are important (2)						
They don't care about all people (3)						
They have an ulterior motive (4)						
In your opinion, do people mainly say "All lives matter" to signal their political allegiance? (5)						



[illegible]

Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Somewhat Agree (4)	Agree (5)	Strongly Agree (6)

[illegible]

## Attitudes Towards Censorship

**End of Block: ALM - Hidden Motives**

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**Start of Block: Demographics**

We will ask you to enter some general questions about yourself.

Age (in years):

▼ 18 (1) ... 60+ (44)

Which gender do you most identify with?

☐ Male (1)

☐ Female (2)

☐ Other (3) \_\_\_\_\_

Which ethnic group do you identify with?

☐ Hispanic (1)

☐ Not Hispanic (2)

What race do you identify with?

☐ White (1)

☐ Black (2)

☐ American Indian, Alaska Native, or Native American (3)

☐ Asian or Pacific Islander (4)

☐ Hispanic/Latinx (5)

☐ Other (6) \_\_\_\_\_

## Attitudes Towards Censorship

Do you consider yourself to be:

	Very Liberal (1)	Liberal (2)	Somewhat at Liberal (3)	Moderate (4)	Somewhat Conservative (5)	Conservative (6)	Very Conservative (7)
Overall Identification (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
On Economic Issues (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
On Social Issues (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
On Foreign Policies (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please select your preferred political party:

- ☐ Democratic Party (1)
- ☐ Republican Party (2)
- ☐ Libertarian Party (3)
- ☐ Green Party (4)

**End of Block: Demographics**

**Attitudes Towards Political Statements****Debriefing Form for participants**

This study was interested in how people respond to various political statements, and some of the processes behind individual's reasoning for their responses. Furthermore, we were also interested to see if individuals would indicate that they may engage in censoring behavior towards others. Censorship refers to the act of suppressing communication because it is perceived as being unacceptable or non-conforming with one's beliefs.

In order to understand this further we asked for information about your viewpoint to one of two political statements, your response to a seeing an individual wearing a politically charged t-shirt, and your various motivations for answering the way you did. Furthermore, you answered a range of demographic questions. The two political statements that were of interest were "Black Lives Matter" and "All Lives Matter".

Now that the full nature of the study has been discussed, if you no longer wish to contribute your information, you may withdraw from the study if you wish by exiting the browser. Furthermore, as the full nature of the study has been discussed, you may not return to the questionnaire to adjust your responses in anyway. There will be no negative penalty to you if you withdraw, however, in accordance to Amazon Mechanical Turk procedure, payment will not be given if you exit the questionnaire. Please note however, that after this session has finished, information cannot be withdrawn from the project as it will be deidentified when it is entered into the computer.

You are welcome to discuss this study further by contact myself or Andrew Vonasch, via the contact details provided below. If you feel the need to talk to anyone further about the effect this study has had on you, outside support can be gained from Mental Healthline in the form of an anonymous and confidential telephone counselling service (1-888-457-8965), or you are welcome to speak with your medical practitioners.

Contact details for the researchers are as follows:

Kate Fox [kate.fox@pg.canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:kate.fox@pg.canterbury.ac.nz)

Dr. Andrew Vonasch [andrew.vonasch@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:andrew.vonasch@canterbury.ac.nz)

Thank you for your participation.

Kind regards, Kate Fox (Masters student, University of Canterbury), Dr. Andrew Vonasch (University of Canterbury).



## Appendix C: Correlation Matrix for ALM condition

## Appendix C: Correlation Matrix for ALM condition

### Correlation Matrix for Participants in the ALM condition

[illegible]

## Attitudes Towards Censorship

**Appendix D: Correlation Matrix for BLM Condition**

Correlation Matrix for participants in BLM condition

		ID with BLM	ID with ALM	Ultior Motive	Political Signal	Bad Person	Harmful to Share View	Censorship
ID with BLM	Pearson's r	—						
	p-value	—						
ID with ALM	Pearson's r	-0.021	—					
	p-value	0.758	—					
Ultior Motive	Pearson's r	-0.356	0.129	—				
	p-value	< .001	0.060	—				
Political Signal	Pearson's r	-0.317	0.178	0.376	—			
	p-value	< .001	0.009	< .001	—			
Bad Person	Pearson's r	-0.479	0.165	0.758	0.392	—		
	p-value	< .001	0.017	< .001	< .001	—		
Harmful to Share View	Pearson's r	-0.499	0.296	0.698	0.423	0.809	—	
	p-value	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—	
Censorship	Pearson's r	-0.210	0.310	0.647	0.260	0.694	0.720	—
	p-value	0.002	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	< .001	—